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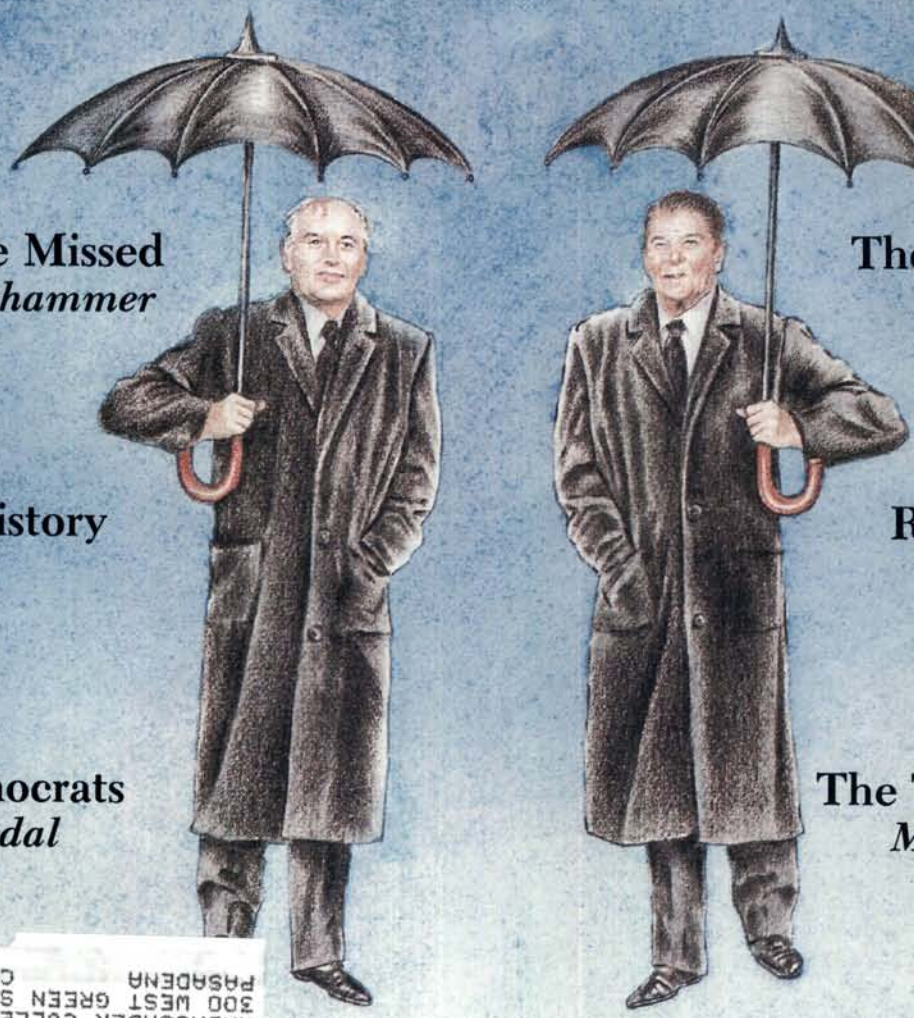

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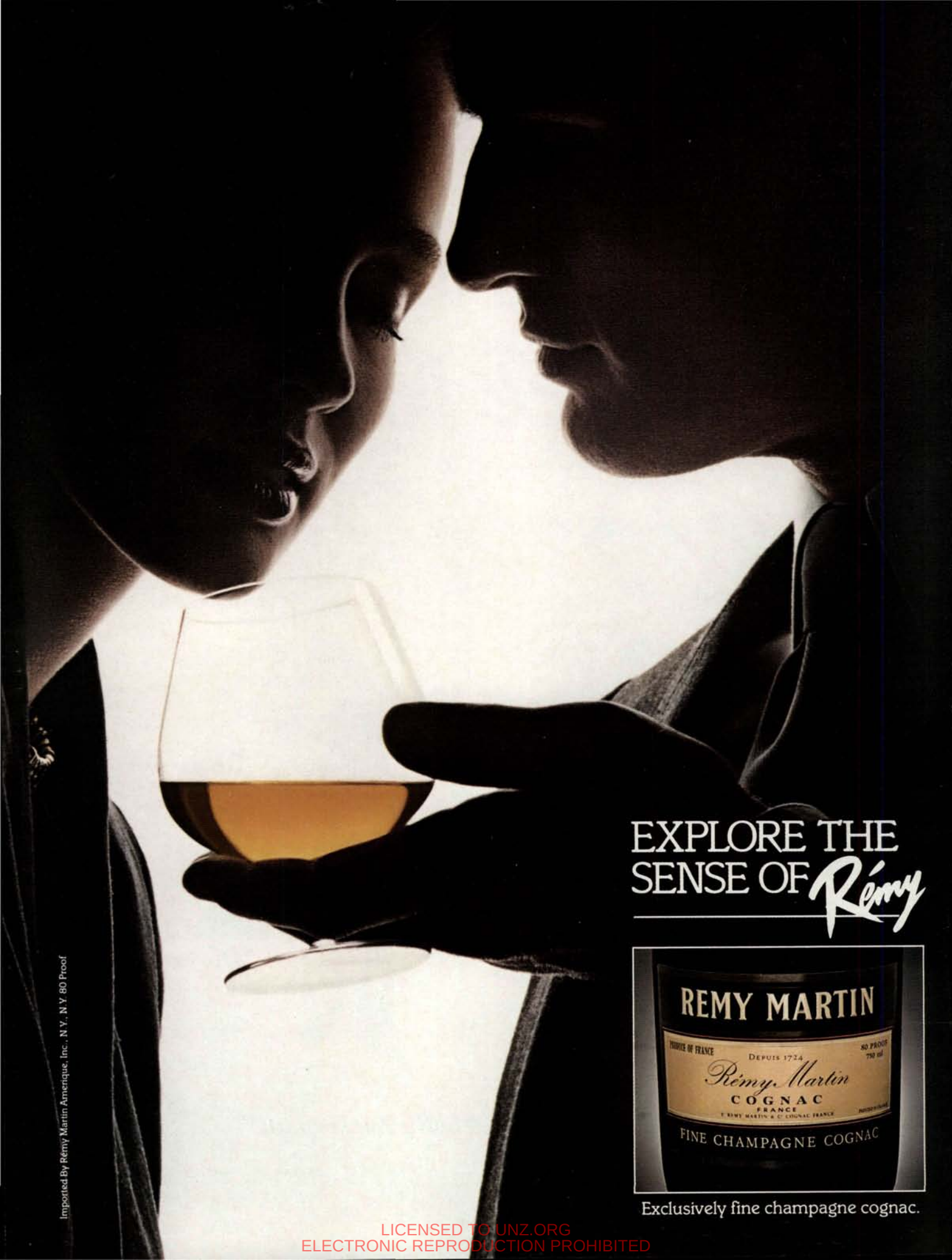

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FROM WASHINGTON

COURT JESTER

Shortly after the Supreme Court ruled that posting the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms is unconstitutional, an Indiana state legislator named Daniel Manion introduced a law to allow the posting of the Ten Commandments in public school classrooms. This became an issue in the bitter Senate confirmation fight when President Reagan nominated Manion as a federal appeals judge. Manion's supporters, including Edwin Meese, insisted at the time—way back last summer—that Manion was not defying the Supreme Court because his law was subtly different from the one the Court had overturned.

Now that Manion is safely confirmed, however, Meese has upped the ante. Manion *was* defying the Supreme Court, the attorney general said October 21. And in doing so, Manion was joining a glorious tradition that includes Lincoln's defiance of the *Dred Scott* decision (denying citizenship to blacks) during what Meese delicately refers to, in deference to Southern sensibilities, as "the War Between the States."

A Supreme Court decision, Meese opined, "lacks the character of law." The parties in the particular case must obey it, and the government must force them to if necessary, but the ruling "does not establish a 'supreme law of the land' that is binding on all persons and parts of the government."

Analysis of this amazing pronouncement must consider two separate questions. What on earth is he talking about? And what is he really up to?

On a very technical level, Meese is right. Nothing in the Constitution gives the Supreme Court exclusive or final say in determining its meaning. The famous 1803 case of *Marbury v. Madison*, which first asserted the right of courts to throw out unconstitutional laws, also made no such claim. Justice Marshall merely argued that the Court's job is to decide cases that come before it, and that in cases where a law conflicts with the Constitution, the Constitution should prevail. The Court did overreach in 1958, as Meese says, when it announced: "*Marbury v. Madison* . . . declared the basic principle that [Supreme Court rulings are] the supreme law of the land."

In theory, though, there's not much difference between Justice Marshall's narrow view and the later expansive view of the Court's authority. Even Meese concedes that Supreme Court precedents are binding on lower courts. Official acts that conflict with Supreme Court rulings can generally be challenged in court. (There are some tiny exceptions in situations where the president has arbitrary power. He can veto a law because he thinks it's unconstitutional, for example, even if the Court has ruled otherwise.) In the end, one way or another, the Supreme Court's view of the Constitution will carry the day. The practical question is how much trouble the other branches are entitled to make along the way.

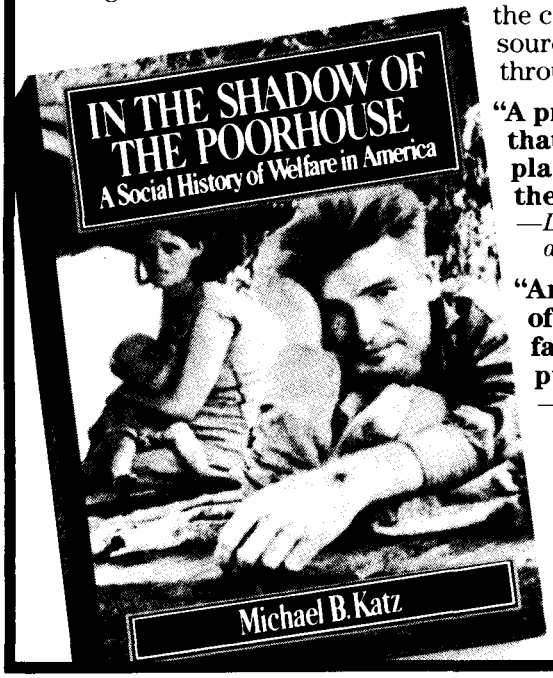
The 1958 opinion Meese objects to, signed by all nine justices, was provoked by Arkansas governor Orval Faubus's use of National Guard troops to prevent black children from entering Little Rock High School. Faubus's position, like Meese's, was that all branches of government are equally free to interpret the Constitution, and he disagreed with *Brown v. Board of Education*. Obviously it is a recipe for chaos, delayed justice, and endless, wasteful litigation if any official or legislator is free to disregard established constitutional doctrine until the Supreme Court has hit him personally over the head.

On the other hand, if Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution were universally accepted as holy writ, there would be no opportunity for the Supreme Court itself to change its mind, as it has done on occasion. *Brown* itself, for example. Sometimes this opportunity can only arise if there's a law or policy that conflicts with a previously established constitutional doctrine. Meese is right that respect

continued on page 48

What's wrong with welfare?

In this first complete social history of American welfare, historian Michael B. Katz demonstrates how conflicting aims have hampered the development of an effective welfare system since colonial times. He argues that while some form of welfare will always be necessary, the country today has the resources to eliminate poverty through creative public policy.



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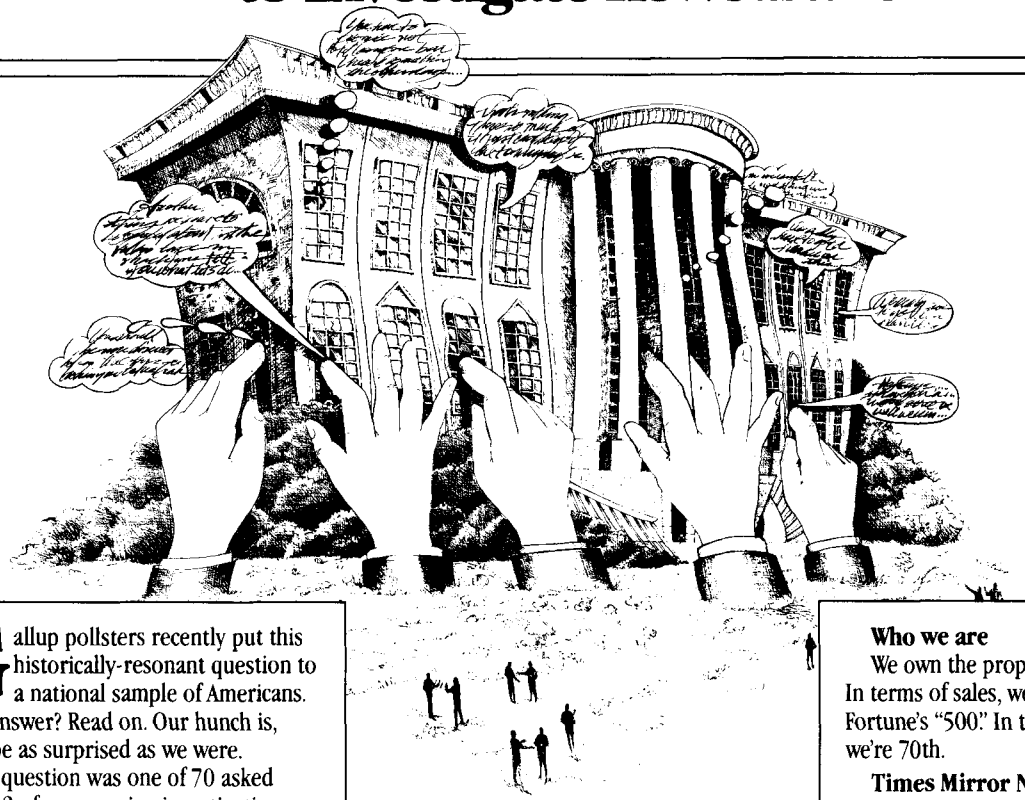
"The People & The Press," Part 2

Would you favor a special White House unit to investigate news leaks?



Gallup pollsters recently put this historically-resonant question to a national sample of Americans. Their answer? Read on. Our hunch is, you'll be as surprised as we were.

The question was one of 70 asked in Part 2 of our ongoing investigation of public attitudes toward the press. This time, Gallup focused on specific issues, including news leaks vs. national security.

And found:

- 45% of the people surveyed either don't know the term "news leak" (16%), can't define it (10%), or define it incorrectly (19%).
- Among those able to define it, 51% think news leaks "rarely compromise national security"; 41% think they "frequently threaten" it; 8% don't know.
- 44% think news leaks serve the public interest; 42% think they harm it; 14% don't know.

Government & The Press

When the entire sample was asked why they think government criticizes the press for reporting stories about national security issues...

- 39% say it's "more because the government believes the stories would harm the nation's defenses";
- 49% say it's "more because the government is trying to cover up problems with the nation's defenses."

Three-fifths (61%) say the press has the "right amount" of freedom to cover national security stories; 19% say "too much"; 17% say "not enough."

Finally, 46% would allow the Justice Department to block reports it feels threaten national security; 20% would require senior officials to take regular lie detector tests...

And 34% would favor a special White House unit to investigate news leaks.

Food for thought, we think, and cause for concern.

What do you think?

Your views will help us serve our readers and viewers better. Send them to our chairman, Robert Erburu, Times Mirror, Times Mirror Square, Suite 100, Los Angeles, CA 90053.

He's also the person to write for our annual report or a summary of "The People & The Press, Part 2." Or you can call our public affairs people at (213) 972-3946.

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We're interested in what you think.

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CORRESPONDENCE

WORK ETHIC DILEMMAS

To the editors:

I congratulate TNR for the attention it has afforded the issue of work and welfare, but I must protest Mickey Kaus's inaccurate reporting. In "The Work Ethic State" (July 7), Kaus (who apparently believes in conservative fashion that training programs are a waste of public funds) reported that our 13,000th ET placement, Cheryl Liberatore, had gone back onto welfare to get a better paying job through ET. He even dubbed this phenomenon the "Cheryl Liberatore Factor."

Clever writing, but wholly inaccurate; Liberatore did not go back onto welfare for the reasons cited by Kaus. But he could not have known that since he never talked to her.

Then, in his rebuttal to the work ethic state symposium (October 6), I was the target. He attributed a quote to me stating that welfare recipients cannot work. I never said nor intimated any such statement. The "four-letter" word also attributed to me may have made my alleged remarks even more provocative, but I am not amused to be used to make "good copy."

I absolutely believe the opposite—that welfare recipients want to work and can work—and I have proof: over 30,000 welfare recipients and applicants have obtained full- or part-time jobs in Massachusetts since ET began three years ago. And our record shows that an astounding 86 percent of those who have left the welfare rolls as a result of ET are still off one year later.

CHARLES M. ATKINS
Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare
Boston, Massachusetts

Mickey Kaus replies:

My mention of Cheryl Liberatore was based on a report in the *Los Angeles Times* by Richard Paddock. Paddock confirms Liberatore told him in a 1985 interview that (as he wrote) "she quit her job last year to go on welfare so she would be eligible for ET." Liberatore now denies she went on welfare for this reason. I've been unable to reach her to get her full account. Mr. Atkins's department says she has requested it not release her phone number, and she has not responded to two letters. Mr. Atkins said every word I attributed to him. He normally touts the work abilities of welfare recipients. But when you suggest *mandating* work, he changes his tune. That's his contradiction, not mine.

To the editors:

There seem to be some assumptions that most of the symposium participants are not examining. (I am one of the famous hard-working single mothers trying to hold things together as best I can.)

Assumption #1: Raising children is not work. Suffice it to say that the feeding, diapering, and myriad other related chores constitute more than a 40-hour week. Only since the industrial revolution has society decided that mothering is not work to be respected and supported. For most of human history this work was recognized as perhaps the single most important task to be done well if the species was to continue.

Assumption #2: Welfare mothers are the only parties responsible, and therefore punishable, for their children's existence. These children of the culture of poverty seem to be immaculately conceived by perverse teenage girls in order to spite the government and the middle class. Therefore we make the girls, and the girls alone, work full-time for poverty wages *and* care for their children. Somebody is fathering all these children and is neither working full-time nor caring for infants. How about making welfare payments contingent on naming the father and then having him work full-time so the mother can give the baby the attention it needs?

Assumption #3: Marriage is your ticket to full-time motherhood. If you want children and still keep your freedom, you must hand them over to someone else so you can make enough money to pay for your and your child's needs and to pay for the child-care worker. In other words, you'd better make at least $40,000. Otherwise, you can't have a child unless you marry a man who can support you so you can have the privilege of caring for your own child.

I'm sorry I can't muster statistics and sound as hardheaded as your other writers. All I have is my own experience

continued on page 49

The economist with no deficit of humor.

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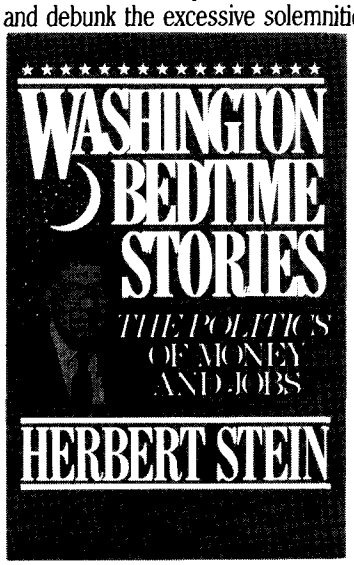

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NOVEMBER 17, 1986

THE BLOOD OF BUDAPEST

On November 8, 1956, the U.N. General Assembly demanded the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. On October 29, stunned by the ferocity and discipline of a genuinely spontaneous popular insurrection, the Soviets had actually begun a retreat from Budapest. The retreat may not have been a ruse at first, but it turned into a cover for redeployment and reinforcements. On November 4 heavily armed Soviet troops launched a full-fledged invasion of Hungary, concentrating their force on the capital. It took them three weeks to pacify the country. But today, 30 years after the pacification, 60,000 Soviet soldiers are still there, part of that phalanx without which Communist rule and Russian domination of Central Europe would long since have become memory. (The post-Yalta term "Eastern Europe" is a semantic subversion that legitimates the Soviet conquest by implying there are natural halves to the continent.) That exhilarating fortnight of precarious independence is only a memory now. The political program that emerged from Budapest then—so youthful and almost naive, yet concrete in the ways it would restore decency and truth and toleration to the public life—had already, miraculously, released men and women from the bondage of alienation and fear.

If the memory still lingers, the reality was quickly torched and rubbled. In subsequent years, however, the vision would come again to haunt the Soviets. And their suppression of Hungary—which is to say their suppression of the vision—would be re-enacted in Czechoslovakia and Poland. What surprises is the resilience in Soviet-occupied Europe, despite defeat and martyrdom, of what first animated the workers and peasants, intellectuals and soldiers, and yes, the legions of disillusioned and shamed communist militants to rise in Hungary in 1956. What moved them then and moves still the palpably discontented populations in the Soviet sphere is what the Marxists disdain as bourgeois or formal liberties, the detritus of false consciousness that communism was to have made obsolete.

Thus Imre Nagy, the purged Communist prime minister who was returned to power on a wave of near-universal protest against the Stalinist regime that had replaced him, was obliged by his supporters in the streets to revive the multiparty system and to restore a free press. Such liberties were, in fact, what was meant in Prague in 1968 by "socialism with a human face." This is dangerous doctrine to Moscow, and not just because the distance to Prague, Warsaw, and Budapest is short. The Hungarian insurrectionary government, following the logic of its popular origins, withdrew from the Warsaw Pact and declared its neutrality between East and West. What is dangerous to the oppressor inspires the oppressed. The revolutionary vision of Hungary, bloodied 30 years ago, is what sustains the Hungarians in their own tragic dignity and what still inspires their neighbors.

The export of political inspiration and of moral ideas is an ironic vocation for a small and isolated people, but such export has long been a Hungarian vocation. Had they spoken a Germanic or Romance language, their contribution to the mind of Europe would be as easily recognized as that of the Austro-Germans or the Czechs, in situ and in exile. Books as interesting as those written about this Vienna *Kreis* and that Prague circle could be written about Budapest. But even without the easily accessible history, the central role of provincial Hungary and the Hungarians (including especially Hungarian Jews) in the formation of the modern sensibility is overwhelming. A list cannot do justice to the rich truth of the Hungarian presence. But it is at least suggestive: scientists John Von Neumann, Leo Szilard, Edward Teller, Eugene Wigner, Albert Szent-Györgyi, Peter Goldmark; sociologist Karl Mannheim; psychoanalysts Sandor Ferenczi and Franz Alexander; writers Arthur Koestler and Ferenc Molnár; musicians Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály, George Szell; philosopher Georg Lukacs; art historian Arnold Hauser; Bauhaus artists Laszlo Maholy-Nagy, Marcel Breuer, Gyorgy Kepes.

The Emperor Franz Joseph hadn't realized the threat to the authority of the monarchy posed by an intellectual atmosphere producing such genius. The commissars, however, understanding quite well the subversive power of free minds, wanted none of it. And in Hungary as elsewhere, as

continued on page 10

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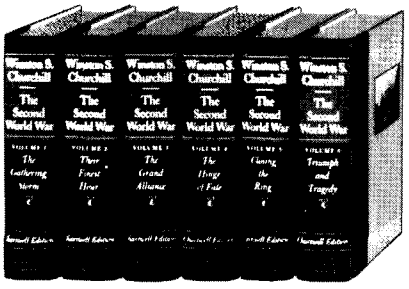

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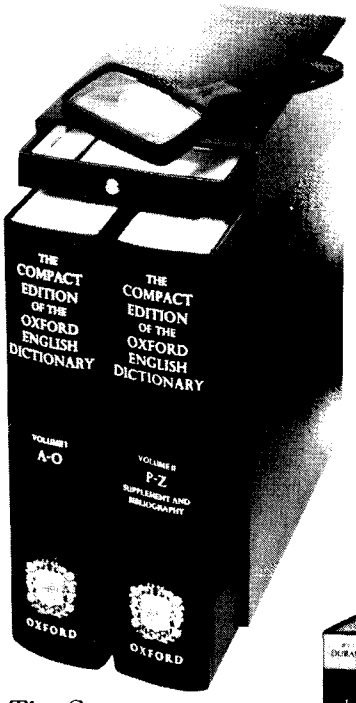
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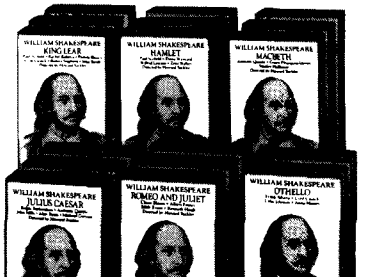

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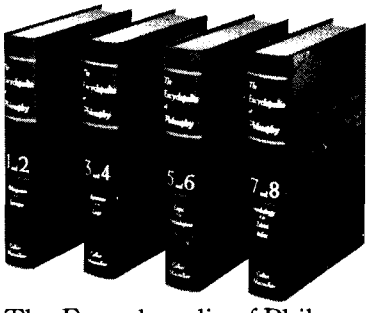

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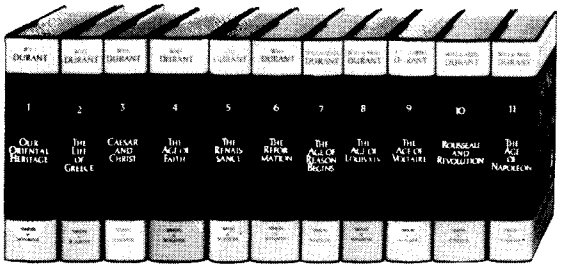
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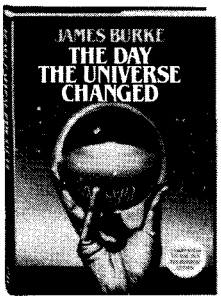

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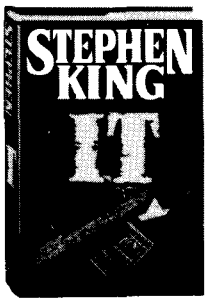

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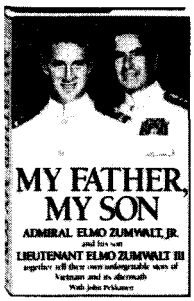

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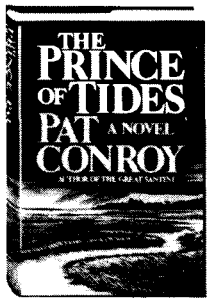

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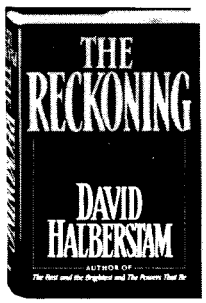

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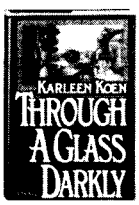

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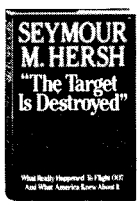

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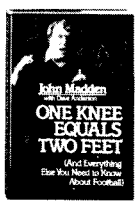

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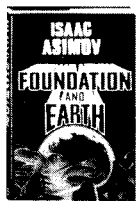

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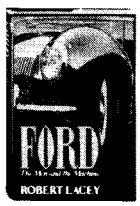

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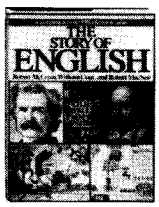

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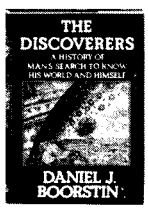

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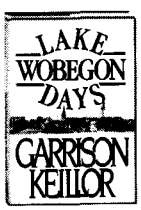

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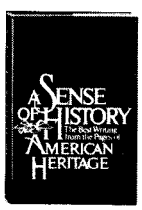

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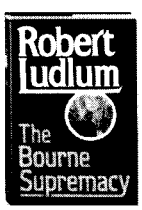

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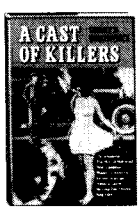

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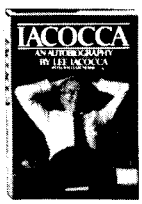

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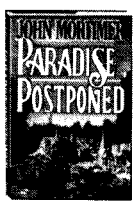

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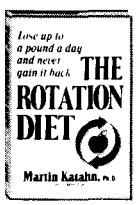

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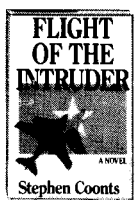

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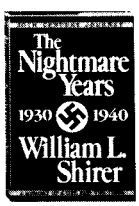

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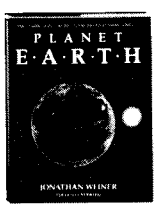

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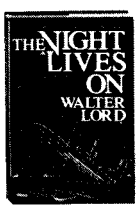

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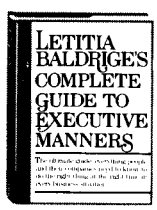

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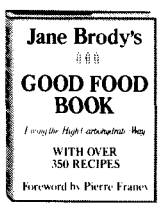

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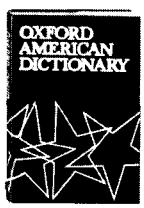

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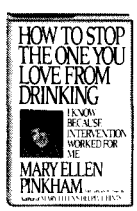

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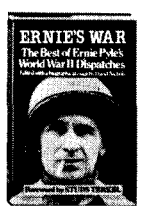

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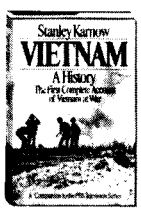

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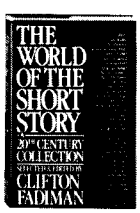

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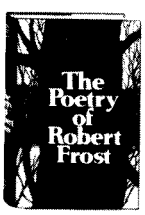

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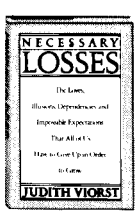

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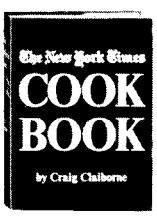

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soon as they had consolidated power, they set out to impose the system of total domination that would make it all impossible. The universities, the publishing houses, the press, the theater were all quickly turned into instruments of the Party, which meant that they were being supervised by the secret police. It was less easy to tame the Church, but as in China then and in Nicaragua now, schismatics were encouraged to choose between the regime and the Vatican.

Nineteen fifty-six is one of those dream dates in European history when the interests of the intellectuals coincided exactly with the interests of the ordinary people, and when they both dovetailed with whatever destiny for independence a historic nation may be said to possess. The status of intellectuals is higher in Europe than it is in America. This meant that the rumblings of professors and writers would reverberate, even in a Communist state, with special force—perhaps particularly in a Communist state where so many professors and writers had voluntarily enlisted in the communist cause. In any case, the members of the Petofi Club (named after a poet-hero of 1848) and of other intellectual circles became more outspoken in their attacks on the government. Students followed the lead, and workers

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart

1. OCTOBER SURMISE — 1 — 5

Summit aftermath. The curious expulsion war, in the wake of what was last billed as real disarmament progress, left everybody guessing at what, other than pique, was going on. Fittingly, it was followed by a renewed debate over who really said what in Iceland, with reports from Geneva that the process *there* has been confused and innuendo from Moscow that Reagan doesn't know one missile from another. As for the Reagan effort to inject Star Wars into the election, even GOP spinmeisters admit it's not catching.

2. THE BOYS OF AUTUMN — — — 1

Baseball. The "greatest-ever" down-to-their-last-strike, come from behind, extra-inning drama of post-season play not only saved a lackluster baseball year, it gave the playoffs weight they seemed to lack 'til now. Also, baseball apparently won its head-to-head showdown with Monday night football. A sports undercurrent: the wave of futile complaints about TV announcers' redundant blather.

3. SENATOR GIPPER — 3 — 2

Elections. To the degree that the GOP has thought up an election issue, it's to position their candidates as Reaganauts who'll carry on the Gipper's work after he's gone. But this only serves to underscore the peculiarly personal nature of Reagan's great popularity; unlike the case of FDR, there's little social class or policy-approval mix in Reagan's following.

4. TEACHER AIDS — — — 1

AIDS. The surgeon general's report on teaching AIDS danger in the schools has sparked AIDS's third wave (the first being the original hype; the second the Rock Hudson aftermath), this one centering (again) on the spread of AIDS among straights. Unsupported but telling rumors are circulating about the drug industry: a discovered cure is under wraps until the disease spreads further, an update of medieval disease hysteria.

5. STOPPED ON A PARADIGM — — — 1

Born Againism. The Christian right, which this week won the Tennessee schoolbook case, has become a self-supporting culture demanding respect from the secular mainstream. Robertson's candidacy is complemented by TV, rock, books, and even Christian toys (see J. C. Penney's new catalog). But where other cultural challenges such as the civil rights and women's movements wanted *into* the mainstream, wealthy and populous Born Againism considers *itself* the mainstream and operates on a paradigm of its own, a recipe for severe social strain.

6. POLICY IN CAMOUFLAGE — 2 — 3

Nicaragua. The Hasenfus show trial in Nicaragua has led to a growth in interest in U.S. mercenaries, from Bay of Pigs vets to *Soldier of Fortune* readers. At the high end of U.S. culture, these figures have always been portrayed as overgrown boys with gun fixations. But they're very popular at the low end, which means that the Hasenfus chapter is less likely to lead to any Central American policy shift than to Chuck Norris's next script.

7. THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS — — — 1

Syrian-sponsored terrorism. The amorphous face of Syria in the group portrait of terrorist villains is striking. Syria has never become a pariah. Assad, who has often outmanipulated the West in his region, wields genuine power; his respectful treatment by the West is revealing. Even the current diplomatic friction arising from the U.K.-El Al incident seems unlikely to develop further, and provides a telling contrast with the case of the vulnerable Libya.

8. CONSTRUE-IT-YOURSELF — — — 1

Meese. The attorney general's remarks on the Supreme Court reopen a conservative debate one might have thought closed, given the Court's rightward makeup. In elevating to national debate his doubts about the application of Court decisions, law-and-order Meese seems willing to undercut the Rehnquist Court in order to impeach Earl Warren. This is true-blue '50s conservatism. By contrast, the surgeon general's office seems a bastion of social progressivism, but never mind.

9. AN AIR OF DISASTER — * — 2

The Ozone Crisis. It still isn't entirely clear why portentous holes have opened in the ozone layer, but given the worst-case scenario—rampant skin cancer and catastrophic ecological imbalance—you'd think the ongoing investigation would be getting bigger play. This is currently a hot small-talk item, but where are the end-of-the-world tabloids when they're needed? FYI, catastrophists years ago classified ozone depletion as a Catastrophe of the Fifth Class.

10. DRIVING FORCE — — — 1

Ford. Accounts of Detroit's efforts to revive itself continue to center on the great success of Ford, especially the popular Taurus model. Profits are up. Chairman Donald Peterson gets a radiant press. Meanwhile, though, newly released historical accounts of the industry (such as the latest David Halberstam mega-opus) have been less friendly to the Fords themselves, and by implication to the idea of single-figure leadership that can undo a company as well as make it; an undercutting of one of the most powerful of American myths.

*Item resurfaced in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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and peasants too—precisely the strata on which theory had lavished so much attention. The ingrates!

The discontent was hard for the rulers to grasp; the concessions called for were not easy to make. The protests and the demands were not primarily material, nor were they the province alone of the intellectuals or the Church. The workers' councils, those extraordinary democratic improvisations, also understood their practical stake in the notion of freedom that is defined by the human capacity for independent thought and independent action. As Hannah Arendt put it, they were not chained to "the absolute priority of the economic system . . . the organization of labor and the mode of consumption and the appropriation of consumer goods." In this sense too, 1956 was an *annus mirabilis.* It all ended in blood and in tears. At the gallows. In prison and in exile.

The state of siege did not, of course, last forever. After five or six years the situation normalized—if we mean by normal the atomization of social life. Much is made of the openness of the Hungarian regime now. (See, for example, "Hungarian Heresy" by William McCord, TNR, October 27.) It is true that the economy is operated more on market assumptions than in any other Communist state. The intellectual life has a vibrancy and a connectedness to the West that is the envy of the intelligentsia throughout the Soviet bloc. Still, the distinctly national aspirations of the Hungarians are suborned to the ambitions of the metropolitan power in Moscow. The regime's tolerance for dissent does not permit much beyond gallows humor, which flourishes even in Russia, and also a certain circumspect criticism in literature for the cultural elites. The Party remains the given, and it negotiates for change not with the citizenry but with the Soviet ambassador. Free elections are out of order and out of line. The Party has given the people a longer chain. And the people have accepted it.

NOTWITHSTANDING its relative economic successes and the comparative absence of terror, Hungary still lives a desultory life, particularly in the political sphere. For all of its Marxist pretenses about the primacy of the mode of production, the Party has insisted on its monopoly not in the market but in politics. It is a Faustian bargain the populace has made: a bit more of the private life in exchange for surrendering any say in the public weal. There are, to be sure, dissidents in Hungary. Recently 54 of them joined some dozens of Poles, Czechs, and East Germans in signing a declaration of homage to the revolution and the revolutionaries. According to Michael T. Kaufman in the *New York Times*, no Hungarian newspaper has yet printed it. Within days of its appearance in Budapest samizdat, one signatory had his passport suspended. Another was evicted from his apartment. A third was shipped off to a mental asylum. The state television has produced a derisory series on the "counterrevolution." Plurality of viewpoint is suspect and forbidden. The regime still lives in fear of the people it rules.

And it probably still lives in fear of the army. One of the most striking aspects of the 1956 Hungarian drama was the rapidity with which the army disintegrated and its soldiers drifted over to the side of the "freedom fighters," a term used here unabashedly. In retrospect, the United States and our allies probably could have done a lot more short of war to prevent the reconsolidation of the tyranny. We did nothing. It is doubtful whether, in extremis, the Soviets would have felt they could rely on the troops of the fraternal socialist countries to reimpose Russian hegemony in Hungary. Yet at the very moment the Red Army was besieging the factories and streets of Hungary, Moscow and Washington were cooperating to force the French and British out of Suez—without even a quid pro quo. John Foster Dulles had apparently forgotten whom he and Ike had pledged to roll back. Perhaps this was his early version of détente.

The Russians had not yet learned to play the détente game. But Stalin had been dead more than three years, and Khrushchev's speech denouncing the crimes of the Stalin era seemed to imply that Stalinist crimes were no longer to be permitted. It was a naive view. From Hungary in 1956 to the Brezhnev Doctrine asserting that there could be no retreat from socialism among the countries in the Soviet ambit, there is a straight line, de-Stalinization and détente notwithstanding. This is the reality, the will of peoples be damned.

In the wake of de-Stalinization, Irving Howe had written: "Just as it will become harder to oppose Russian power, so will it become harder to oppose the intellectual claims of its apologists. Analytically this will require more flexibility; morally, a greater intransigence. . . . For now we shall no longer have Stalin helping us." When Khrushchev invaded Hungary, we had neither the needed flexibility nor the intransigence. Now the apologists are too smart to lay claims for Russia per se, and do so instead for its distant outposts and to the same ends. This, then, is a greater challenge, to which, alas, it appears we may not be equal.

NOTEBOOK

□ REHNQUIST SCHOOL OF 'BALLOT INTEGRITY': Earlier this year the Republican National Committee launched a campaign to discourage black voter turnout in the 1986 election. The method was to send letters to all registered voters in congressional districts that had voted 75 percent for Walter Mondale in 1984—mostly black areas. If a letter was returned, the Republicans planned to challenge the voter's right to cast a ballot. When the Democratic Party sued to stop the program, the RNC insisted that it harbored no racial motives, only a high-minded desire to maintain "ballot integrity." But RNC officials were quick to note its effect on the black vote in Louisiana. In a memo made public in the lawsuit, an RNC official stated, "I would guess that this program will eliminate at least 60-80,000 folks from the rolls [in Louisiana]. If it's a close race, which I'm assuming it is, this could keep the black vote down considerably." Perhaps the RNC's $10 million

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program was inspired by conservative hero William Rehnquist. During Rehnquist's confirmation hearings, several witnesses from Phoenix, Arizona, swore that in the early 1960s they saw the future chief justice aggressively challenging minority voters at polling places. No wonder the GOP's much-touted effort to attract black voters is going nowhere.

□ LOW-ROAD LINDA: In the generally miserable political debate in the 1986 election, Maryland Republican senatorial candidate Linda Chavez has set this year's record for sleaziness. Chavez opened her campaign by claiming that her opponent, Representative Barbara Mikulski, is a "San Francisco-style Democrat." As Chavez slipped in the polls, the innuendo became less veiled. She challenged Mikulski to "come out of the closet" and admit her "anti-male" views. Chavez's implicit message about Mikulski—who is middle-aged and unmarried—is pretty clear. Yet Chavez continues to insist that she is not engaged in a "personal attack." The hell she ain't. Edward Rollins, a former White House aide who advises Chavez, offered the *Washington Post* this last-gasp rationalization for Chavez's gutter tactics: "It would have been nice to debate foreign affairs and economic theory, but it hasn't been that kind of campaign."

□ HIGH ON THE HOG: But the really close Senate races are in the Midwest, where hard-pressed family farmers, barely able to scratch a living from the windswept prairie, are in the process of sending leaders to Washington to protect them from economic change and government caprice. Or so the saga goes. Well, the latest figures on personal income are in, and guess which states showed the biggest growth in the second quarter of this year? North Dakota, up 13 percent. South Dakota and Nebraska, up ten percent. Iowa, Kansas, and Minnesota, all up over five percent. Wherefore the bonanza? Huge government subsidy payments under the 1985 farm bill, of course. Farmers are one of many groups in America going through a period of economic distress. But only farmers are being helped through hard times with massive government handouts. That should give you some idea of what farm state voters and politicians are fighting to preserve.

□ DEBATABLE:

Green Attacks Aggressively In 1st Debate With D'Amato

(*New York Times*, October 22, early edition)

In Initial Debate, D'Amato Ignores Green and Criticism

(Later edition)

Look what they've done to the GOP.

BAY STATE TURKEYS

Boston

Gregory S. Hyatt, 32 years old, of North Andover, is a member of the Massachusetts bar, a veteran of the referendum drive that capped local real estate taxes at 2.5 percent of actual market value, a sometime protégé of millionaire manufacturer Ray Shamie (unsuccessful conservative Republican challenger of Senator Edward M. Kennedy in 1982 and Senator John F. Kerry in 1984), preconvention frontrunner for his party's gubernatorial nomination this year, and GOP primary ballot winner (with 49,000 votes) of that designation.

He also did not run. Although he looks something like the Martin Landau of "Mission Impossible" vintage, his mission did not care to accept him. His candidacy self-destructed when he was described by a former client as a total dud in the delivery of polling and petition services, and by a secretary who said he liked to talk into telephones that weren't connected, and occasionally took off all of his clothes in the office. Then the Democrats alleged remarkable similarities of penmanship among signatures on his nomination papers. Published reports later in the summer established he'd alleviated money worries by accepting either loans or contributions from George T. Kattar, who's awaiting trial on federal charges alleging fraud, gunrunning, narcotics enterprises, and other colorful endeavors. Having pledged to withdraw as GOP standard-bearer should he win the September 16 primary, Hyatt, as a further bit of merriment, fudged for a day or so after his triumph before finally discharging his vow.

This came as a great relief to party seneschals. It meant that their third choice for governor, George S. Kariotis, will confront incumbent Democratic Governor Michael S. Dukakis as the officially designated Republican nominee. Their second choice, state Representative Royall Switzler, withdrew shortly after the party convention in April bolted from Hyatt and nominated him. True, the Republican gubernatorial nomination in Massachusetts is a privilege akin to that of batting clean-up for the Seattle Mariners on a Fenway night when Roger Clemens is striking out 20, but it did tidy things up a bit, and stifled some of the laughter.

It was not ever thus. Twenty years ago this November, sachems of the Bay State Republican Party looked forward to their Thanksgiving feasts with hearts unusually happy. Only two years after the Goldwater presidential debacle had left most such units in shambles, Bay State tories had elected a U.S. senator, a governor, a lieutenant governor, an attorney general, and five of the commonwealth's 12 members of Congress. Most encouraging, perhaps, was the ethnic mixture of the winning combination: the senator was Edward W. Brooke, a black; the governor was John A. Volpe, an Italian-American; only Lieutenant Governor

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Francis Sargent and Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson on the statewide ticket represented the Yankee Brahmin sector of the party that had dominated it for years. The future looked promising.

That appearance was misleading. The ostensibly vigorous blending of ethnic, religious, and racial origins into the top party structure was a mirage. Brooke was a Republican chiefly because he would've been even less welcome in the Democratic ranks. Volpe's ticket into upper-party ranks was for one admission only. And the Brahmin leaders decamped without grooming their next generation to succeed them. (At least one solon of noble lineage, William Saltonstall, was affronted by income-reporting laws.) The party began to resemble a major league baseball team with no farm clubs. Election-year Novembers in recent years have featured enough gobblers to make Thanksgiving's turkeys redundant.

"IT'S AMATEUR NIGHT, night after night," Jack Flannery said, viewing the chaos from his vantage as chief secretary to the commonwealth's last Republican governor, Frank Sargent, and professional adviser to most would-be GOP leaders since. "Perfectly nice people, competent at what they do, successful businessmen and so forth, with absolutely no street smarts at all. They come to you for advice, and the first thing you say to them is: 'Is there anything in your background that we should know about? That'll embarrass you when the *Globe* prints it on the front page?' And they shake their heads. 'Why, no,' they say, feelings are hurt that you would even ask, 'nothing like that at all.' They think that you mean child-molesting," he said. " 'Trumped-up resume?' Doesn't even cross their minds, that that could be damaging."

Lack of savvy runs like a thread the thickness of a hawser through recent Massachusetts Republican history. In 1982 debonair John Lakian, a self-made prosperous developer, sought to parlay his charismatic business skills into a triumphant campaign against the winner of the savage Democratic primary rematch between former Governor Michael S. Dukakis and incumbent Edward J. King, who had ousted him in '78. The *Globe* scrutinized Lakian's campaign literature and reported he'd been misrepresenting his educational background for years; he compounded his misery by suing the *Globe* for defamation, losing that fray as well.

This year, panicked by the Hyatt prospect of a candidate who might really choose to hide nothing, the convention dragooned Switzler as its standard-bearer. A Wellesley real estate broker with a penchant for oratorical and procedural heckling of the House's Democratic majority, he only tardily perceived that the media would prove less indulgent toward a potential governor than it had been of Mister Bluster as a harmless representative (one of but 34 Republicans in the 160-member House). But he swallowed his pride and saved the newshounds some sweaty effort: he confessed soon after nomination that he'd falsified his military record, elevating his sergeancy in peacetime Korea into a combat captaincy with the Green Berets in Vietnam. He announced he'd withdraw, waffled a bit, and then made good on it.

Hurriedly responding to the resultant hilarity, party elders led by former Governor Volpe convened late in July and contrived to persuade Alpha Industries founder George Kariotis to leave his high-tech post to take the tarnished flagon. Presumably ex-Democrat Kariotis (he had been a chief aide to Governor King) was so preoccupied, weighing the cons of running on stickers—it was too late to change the primary ballot—that he overlooked the potential for public scorn lurking in his company's years-long struggle with state environmental authorities over cleaning up its toxic waste. The media soon refreshed his recollection, in abundant detail. His wife was so preoccupied with his preoccupations that their well-camaraed trip to the primary polls found her unable to vote for him—she was still a Democrat.

Such pratfalls have not enriched the fortunes of subordinate candidates. No Republican was able to seek reelection to a statewide office this year—no Republican held one. The only Massachusetts Republican congressman surviving among the current allotment of 11 is Silvio O. Conte, the foxy charmer from the Berkshires so anathematic to the opposition that he's gotten Democratic nominations along with the GOP's.

IT DIDN'T HAPPEN overnight, this parlous state of organizational inanition. The party passively suffered several grave setbacks—Brooke's unexpected defeat in 1978 at the hands of Paul Tsongas, greatly aided by the simultaneous decision of Brooke's then-wife and their embittered daughter to air out the family's linens in the probate court; GOP Representative Margaret Heckler's loss to Democratic Representative Barney Frank in the new district devised from parts of their former two bailiwicks. But these were not of a magnitude greater than a robust body might have shaken off. No, what happened to the Massachusetts Republican Party was the result of leadership refusal to perceive and heed signs of incipient decay. The victory of '66 was the fluke, not the virtually unbroken string of disasters that followed. Misled by that prosperity, they labored under the *post hoc, propter hoc* misapprehension that since things started to go wrong when Volpe and Richardson decamped for Washington in midterm to serve the new Nixon administration, things would improve as soon as fresh troops appeared. But the manpower shortage was not transient; those troops have not shown up. The problem shows dispiriting evidence of being permanent.

They should have seen it coming. Between 1948 and 1964, registered Republican ranks in Massachusetts increased by 12,964, to 641,588; the Democrats added 371,173 to their base of 632,543. Twenty-two years later, the Democrats now number 1,454,372; the GOP lists 412,213, a little over 22 percent of the committed electorate dwarfed by a restlessly swarming body of Independents varying from one million to 1.2 million depending on the quality of

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primary browse offered by the candidates. Young candidates contemplating lives in Republican politics know they can count on at most but 13 percent of the electorate to back them in quest of the minor offices that are the forcing beds of great careers. Enviable appointive slots are generally accessible only when the GOP controls the White House (and can seem more tempting than risky nominations—U.S. Attorney William Weld this year opted out of a second contest for attorney general, having previously lost to Democrat Francis X. Bellotti; he preferred the surer thing of chief of the criminal division in the U.S. Department of Justice). Such realities do not inspirit men and women with ambition. They run the family businesses, or practice law instead. Seven Democrats seeking the state's 11 congressional seats will do so without GOP interference. Overall, 264 of the 369 Democratic candidates for state and county billets this November need only to keep breathing to hold victory celebrations.

THAT LEAVES the vacuum filled by the amateurs. Innocent of the probable explanation for the availability of what appear to be choice nominations for the taking, well-heeled ideologues—instinctual, not philosophically systematic conservatives—gain organizational influence with an alacrity grossly disproportionate to their experience. Accustomed to gratifying success in business or profession, and believing their expertise applicable to all fields including politics, they infer from their hospitable welcome to beleaguered party ranks not that discretion would be wise but that valor is required.

The whole thing is rather sad. Although the plethora of ambitious Democrats competing for too few positions probably reduces to a minimum the undesirable coziness that can lead to generalized corruption or lassitude in one-party realms (the architects of Boston mayor Kevin White's departure after four terms were almost all fellow Democrats), their customary majorities do not guarantee that their policies are right. Debate is impoverished when the struggles are between persons of basically like minds, chiefly striving for distinction by personality and winning smiles. It is true that Massachusetts has grown sleek and fat under recent Democratic regimes, but it is noteworthy that a prime factor causing that prosperity was tax-limiting Prop. 2½, strenuously opposed by Democratic chieftains in thrall to special interest lobbies, such as education unions and government workers of the AFSCME.

The model for that initiative was California, of course. Maybe the Massachusetts GOP should look into a Cape Cod retreat for Ronald Reagan—on the Falmouth side, far from Hyannis Port—just in case when '90 comes he feels a little bored and wants something new but still familiar to occupy his time. He is, after all, the last experienced Republican governor to carry Massachusetts—maybe he knows something.

GEORGE V. HIGGINS

George V. Higgins's recent novel is *Imposters* (Holt).

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

BEAMING LEGACY

IN THE Air Force One flight back to Washington from the Iceland summit, there wasn't much merriment. President Reagan had lost out on sweeping reductions in American and Soviet offensive nuclear arsenals because of his refusal to bargain away his Strategic Defense Initiative. But three people were smiling. Two of them, White House speechwriter Anthony Dolan and communications czar Patrick J. Buchanan, burst into laughter every time they glanced at each other. This was remarkable, since Dolan and Buchanan don't much like each other, Buchanan having tried (unsuccessfully) to install a new head speechwriter as Dolan's superior. Still, both are hard-line advocates of Star Wars, and it had survived the summit.

The third smiler was Reagan. From his initial session on October 11 with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Reagan had figured that the Soviets would demand sharp curbs on development of Star Wars. "They're coming straight for SDI," he told a White House official over lunch after that first session, and he was angered when Gorbachev did just that the next day. Reagan flashed a grim face in public as he and Gorbachev walked from their final meeting. But the mood passed quickly. By the time Reagan got to Keflavik Airport to address American military personnel less than an hour later, he was buoyant. He read from a Buchanan-drafted text claiming that, though he couldn't agree to abandon "a defense against nuclear missiles for the people of the Free World," the summit had been "extremely useful." He ad-libbed a favorite joke, the one about the three dopes who try to jimmy a locked car, though the convertible top is down.

Much of the press missed Reagan's upbeat speech. At the time, most reporters were listening to Secretary of State George Shultz's downbeat assessment of the summit. There is a simple explanation for the contrast between Shultz and Reagan. The president was a lot more comfortable with the outcome of the summit than Shultz was. True, Reagan is more eager than practically anyone in his administration to eliminate nuclear weapons completely. But he is also the hardest of hard-liners on developing Star Wars. He's crazy about it. And in a crunch—in Iceland, for example—he'll always take Star Wars over weapons reductions.

Partly as a result of Reagan's rhetoric about making nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete," the White House press corps long ago concluded that the president's fondest dream is to leave a fresh arms control agreement behind as his beaming legacy. Wrong. More than anything else, Reagan wants an operational Star Wars system as his legacy. He is fully persuaded that a three-layered missile defense will work. "He doesn't have a doubt about it," says an aide. The word that White House officials now use to designate what Reagan envisions is "astrodome."

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So set is Reagan on the idea of a coast-to-coast, impenetrable roof over America that he is not interested at all in scaled-down versions of Star Wars that might be deployed more quickly—in, say, five years. A group of Republican hawks, including Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming and Representatives Jack Kemp of New York and Jim Courter of New Jersey, implored Reagan last August to order up an interim Star Wars. Wallop gave Reagan an article from the *Washington Times* on the subject by physicist Robert Jastrow, a Star Wars enthusiast. And Buchanan sent along a truncated version of the Jastrow piece, which argues that a system of 40,000 "smart bullets" designed to shoot down Soviet missiles could be deployed in five years. The cost: a cool $50 billion. Reagan was unconvinced. He told an aide that pursuing such a system would "divert" resources from the real thing, the astrodome.

One aspect of the summit that no one at the White House expected was the geyser of popular support that both Reagan and Star Wars received afterward. Following a Reagan briefing for two dozen columnists and commentators a few days before the summit, one official confessed his major worry. If the summit blew up, fine. Reagan would be acclaimed. If an agreement was forged, better yet. That would produce even more acclaim. But should Gorbachev depart the summit more in sorrow than in anger, saying that he'd gone the extra mile but Reagan just wouldn't budge on Star Wars, that would be trouble. Reagan would then be subjected to enormous pressure at home to make concessions on Star Wars. This third scenario, of course, is precisely what happened in Iceland, with the opposite result from what the official anticipated. Poll after poll shows that Americans overwhelmingly believe, for now at any rate, that Reagan should not have given up Star Wars. The margin was 67 percent to 20 percent for Star Wars in the CBS News/*New York Times* survey, 69 percent to 20 percent in a *Time* poll. By demanding that Star Wars be scrapped, a senior aide says, "Gorbachev has done more to solidify Star Wars than anyone except Reagan. It's untouchable now."

Actually there's a difference of opinion at the White House as to what produced the popular support for Reagan's summit performance and Star Wars. Some officials, including press secretary Larry Speakes and his deputy Peter Roussel, credit the "spin control" exerted by administration officials. Roussel boasted to the *New York Times* that officials held "nearly 100 media events," most of them after the summit. This, he suggested, helped persuade the public that Reagan handled the summit well. Others in the White House, especially those who want to see Star Wars deployed, not bargained away, scoff at this. "The president won this thing" by staring down Gorbachev on Star Wars, says an official who is no admirer of Speakes. "Our spin control didn't."

EVERYONE AT THE White House did agree, however, that Reagan should exploit the popular feeling to aid Republican candidates and, in the words of one adviser, "lock in" support for Star Wars. Reagan did his part. He wrote, in longhand, a five-page explanation of arms control that became the opening section of his nationally televised speech on October 13, the day after the summit. One aide boldly told Reagan that he should stick with what speechwriters had drafted for him. "No," he said, "I want to go with mine." Reagan concentrated on explaining acronyms and making the case for Star Wars over the nuclear doctrine of mutual assured destruction. He said that scientists researching Star Wars "are convinced it is practical and that several years down the road we can have such a system ready to deploy." That, in his own words, is what Reagan believes.

On the stump, too, Reagan made a point of discussing mutual destruction and Star Wars. In Norman, Oklahoma, and Tampa, Florida, on October 24, he digressed from his text to talk down the notion that Star Wars would give the United States a first-strike nuclear capability. "Some people have thought . . . that we're striving to prepare for a first strike, to be able to defend ourselves, but shoot missiles at the other fellow." Au contraire, he said. Once Star Wars is ready, he'll invite the Soviets to "share the defensive system," if only to keep them from being "tempted to a first strike in order to prevent us from getting the capacity for a first strike." Note that Reagan is conceding that Star Wars would give this country "the capacity" for a first strike, or would lead the Soviets to believe that capacity might exist.

NOT ONLY WAS Reagan eager to help Republican candidates who agree with him, he also wanted to force Democrats, fearful of being hurt by the issue, to express public support for Star Wars. "You can lock in a significant amount of support, no matter who winds up in control of the Senate," says a Reagan aide. Indeed, many Democrats rushed to endorse Star Wars. In the Louisiana Senate race John Breaux insisted that he backed Star Wars, but that he'd spend a little less on it. In Florida Bob Graham said roughly the same. On "Sunday Morning with David Brinkley" on October 26, Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas denied that Democrats opposed Star Wars. The White House may try to capitalize on this soon after the election by asking for a supplemental appropriation. Congress cut funding this year from the $5.2 billion sought by Reagan to $3.4 billion. Now the White House may seek a quick $1.3 billion more.

Aboard Air Force One on the flight from Iceland, there was a tearful embrace between president and speechwriter after Dolan sent Reagan a note of congratulations. They were tears of joy, not remorse. An hour into the flight, Reagan walked back to the staff section on the plane. He played a game with William Henkel, the chief White House advance man, and Flo Gantt, an assistant on the National Security Council staff. Reagan asked them the month they were born, the day, and so on down a list of numbers and calculations. Then he announced their age. "The president has this down pat," says an aide. Reagan didn't mention the summit at all.

FRED BARNES

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The case for a modified ban.

TESTING, TESTING

JOHN F. KENNEDY and Nikita Khrushchev did the world a great service by signing the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963. By forbidding atmospheric nuclear tests, they stopped the superpowers from pumping strontium 90 and other radioactive debris into the environment. Kennedy wanted to go on to sign a Comprehensive Test Ban and bar even underground testing of nuclear weapons, in the belief that "we test and then they test and we have to test again. And you build up until somebody uses them." In fact, nobody has used them, but the conviction has persisted for more than 20 years that somehow the arms race could be stopped and nuclear war prevented if only both sides would stop testing.

This year both the House and Senate passed resolutions urging a test ban. Polls indicate strong public support for it. Mikhail Gorbachev is widely perceived to have gained a worldwide propaganda advantage by unilaterally halting nuclear tests for 14 months, and what's left of the nuclear freeze movement has mounted a campaign to get the Reagan administration to join the moratorium and move as quickly as possible to fulfill Kennedy's dream of a CTB treaty. As astronomer Carl Sagan put it, explaining why he got arrested in August at a nuclear test site in Nevada, "Testing is a major motor driving the arms race—the manic, obsessive, continual ratcheting up of the arms race."

If so many people are for a CTB, even John Kennedy, shouldn't everyone be? The Reagan administration isn't, and it has some good arguments to back up its opposition. The main one is theoretical: as long as the United States is going to rely on nuclear weapons to deter war, we should be sure that they work. If no tests are conducted, warheads will physically deteriorate and so will confidence in their reliability. The pro-CTB movement is split on how to react to this argument. One faction says: "Right on. If there are no tests, eventually no one either here or in Russia will dare think of using a nuclear weapon, and since it's a Soviet attack we're worried about, it's to our advantage to have them think that their weapons might well be duds."

The problem with this argument is the same one that arises from President Reagan's hasty embrace of Gorbachev's proposal at Reykjavik to ban all nuclear weapons in ten years: the NATO alliance relies on nuclear weapons to deter not only nuclear war, but also conventional attack. If we have no nukes—or if we can't count on them working—we will have to hugely upgrade our conventional preparedness, at huge cost. Further, having unreliable nuclear weapons does not mean that the two sides wouldn't have *any* nuclear weapons. In a crisis, one side or the other might be inclined to use what it thought was its most reliable system in order to wipe out the system on the other side that it feared the most. Unreliability might actually hasten a resort to nukes rather than retard it.

A more common argument put forward by CTB advocates is the opposite of the first: the reliability of the existing nuclear stockpile *can* be maintained, through computer simulations and by periodically remanufacturing warheads using proven blueprints; the ban would only stop development of new weapons. But former officials from the Carter administration and Reagan's Pentagon expert on testing, Frank Gaffney, all say that reliability can't be maintained without testing. Nuclear weapons components need to be built to micromillimeter tolerances and perform with microsecond timing. Gaffney points out that this can't be guaranteed if, say, a defense contractor goes out of business and is replaced by another, or if a production line is shut down and then reopened. James Schlesinger, who was Gerald Ford's defense secretary and Jimmy Carter's energy secretary, agrees. "You don't need 17 tests a year, and you don't need them as big as 150 kilotons," he said, "but as long as you depend on nuclear deterrence, you've got to have some tests."

Schlesinger and four other former officials (Carter's secretaries of defense and state, Harold Brown and Cyrus Vance; Ford's national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft; and Nixon's defense secretary, Melvin Laird) have recommended that the United States agree with the Soviets not to ban all underground tests, but to limit them to ten or 15 kilotons. This is a tenth or less the yield of U.S. and Soviet tests authorized under the unratified 1974 Threshold Test Ban Treaty, which Reagan promised in Iceland to send to the Senate if verification techniques can be agreed upon. Schlesinger says that reliability testing can be done in the 15-kiloton range, and that this low-threshold proposal would still accomplish the major goal of the CTB movement: prevent development of new types of warheads.

Should the United States quit developing new warheads? Reagan officials say that new warheads and delivery systems are needed to respond to Soviet advances that may be either nuclear or non-nuclear. The single-warhead Midgetman missile much favored by Democrats will use the same charge as the existing Minuteman missile, but Gaffney and Reagan arms control chief Kenneth Adelman say that other systems may have to be developed in the future requiring a new warhead that would have to be tested.

On the other hand, Carter's former Pentagon research chief, Russell Murray, now on the staff of the House Armed Services Committee, claims that the United States is ahead of the Soviets in warhead sophistication, so a halt would benefit us. "If we let them keep testing," he says, "they will develop smaller and lighter warheads. When you add to that the fact that they have bigger missiles, it spells trouble." The more warheads the Soviets can load onto their heavy missiles, the greater the vulnerability of U.S. land-based systems. Murray says that another logical Soviet development would be lighter warheads for depressed-trajectory missiles that could hit U.S. bomber bases and command centers in a surprise strike from ships at sea. Schlesinger, Brown, and Company say the advantages of barring new warheads outweigh the risks.

The administration has some other arguments in favor

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of testing-as-usual. It claims it wants to determine what happens to weapons, satellites, computers, and communications systems when exposed to X-rays, neutrons, and other nuclear effects; to make weapons safer so that they won't spread radioactivity in an accident; and to improve their security so that they cannot be set off by terrorists. Kennedy did not get the CTB in 1963 because it was blocked by Soviet refusal to agree to on-site inspection and also by anticipated congressional and Pentagon opposition. Schlesinger says that is a good thing. Otherwise, "we'd now be stuck with unsafe and insecure weapons based on 1960s testing." Since then, though, new explosives and safety triggers have been developed. Most nuclear effects can be tested at low yields, according to Murray.

After all other arguments are disposed of, the gut issue for both many advocates and opponents of nuclear testing is President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative—specifically, the X-ray laser idea advanced by Dr. Edward Teller. Even though it's a far-out concept (by one expert estimate, deployability is at least 40 years off), Teller's backing has given the proposal prestige and financing in the Reagan administration, and not surprisingly it is also a major target of test-banners and arms control advocates. Whereas the president persistently advertises SDI as strictly nonnuclear, which most SDI systems are, the Teller system envisages a hydrogen bomb explosion in space to power a laser blast that would knock down an enemy missile. Some preliminary X-ray laser testing might be done at low yields, but developing an actual weapon would require high-yield testing—and, probably, some explosions in space that would violate the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty.

If one trusts the opinion of moderate former government officials who have grappled for years with nuclear strategy, the Reagan administration seems to have been right in resisting pressure to join Gorbachev's testing moratorium and to rush to sign a Comprehensive Test Ban. Gorbachev appears to have scheduled his moratorium to begin after a Soviet test series had just been completed, and did it for propaganda purposes, correctly anticipating that the United States would not agree to go along. As John Kennedy observed in anger when the Soviets broke a three-year test moratorium in 1961, moratoriums favor the Soviets because they can keep laboratories open and scientists employed waiting for testing to resume; a free society can't.

Some officials, including Schlesinger, Murray, and former White House national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, think that the testing issue is fundamentally an arms control sideshow and a diversion from the main business of reducing the number of weapons that could hit the United States. But many of them also think that the Reagan administration could have been much more dextrous in countering Gorbachev's propaganda if it had called for drastically reduced numbers and yields of tests. They seem to have it right: contrary to Kennedy's fears, nuclear deterrence has kept the peace for 40 years, and deterrence requires *some* testing, but a lot less than we've been doing.

MORTON KONDRACKE

Skip the peace shield delusion.

SDI FOR DEMOCRATS

IN THE PUBLIC mind, the idea of strategic defense is the child of Ronald Reagan, who fathered, mothered, and delivered the baby in his Star Wars speech of March 1983. Democrats attacked the program as a pipe dream, and the stage was set for an essentially one-dimensional, partisan debate. Today you are either for the Reagan Strategic Defense Initiative or against it; you either favor dealing it away in exchange for an arms control pact with the Soviets, or you don't. Is there a third option? Can there be a Star Wars program for Democrats, a plan to shield against nuclear weapons, but one more plausible than the president's seriously flawed SDI approach? The answer is yes.

In fact, supporters of strategic defense outside the administration already agree with Star Wars critics on many points. The critics are right that technology never will provide a leakproof shield against nuclear weapons. They are right that it is silly to spend $25 billion to $50 billion researching that possibility. They are also right about the bureaucratic nature of the Pentagon. If the military-congressional complex does design a strategic defense, it will probably be a gold-plated disaster—with consequences much worse than a costly toilet seat.

Most important, the critics are right that the Soviet Union is serious in its inflexible stand against the SDI program. Reagan pledges fealty to the 1972 ABM Treaty, banning any really effective defense. Yet he is spending billions to research a system whose construction would violate that treaty, describing it as a way to render the Soviet deterrent "impotent and obsolete." He thus raises maximum fears that America seeks nothing less than nuclear superiority. Yet he does nothing to close the "window of vulnerability" that he ran against in 1980. The Soviets are right to view all this with suspicion. The contradictory rationales used to defend SDI allow for only one prudent assumption: that the United States plans to get out of the ABM Treaty by the 1990s, and then build a highly effective shield against Soviet nuclear weapons.

Despite all these valid criticisms, however, SDI remains a popular program. Polls taken after the Iceland summit show, for example, that by 20 to 26 percent, Americans favor development of a strategic defense. Other polls show that they favor going ahead with SDI if the alternative is further concessions to the Soviet position. Democrats need to devise a position for themselves that captures much of the public sentiment behind Star Wars, yet rallies it behind something different.

How about this proposal? (1) Cut funding for the present SDI research effort in half, largely by eliminating work on some laser beams and other exotic "kill mechanisms." (2) Use the money saved actually to build an advanced defense using less futuristic technology. The most likely system would employ a ground-based interceptor rocket,

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such as Lockheed's ERIS missile, supplemented by tracking systems based in space or on airplanes. Because the ERIS can reach well outside the atmosphere to knock down nuclear warheads, and because of its rapid flight time, this system would shield not just hardened points, but virtually the entire United States, from small numbers of warheads. Combined with cheap Gatling guns—a true point defense of missiles, air fields, and vulnerable command and control centers—the ERIS system would provide a highly effective shield of U.S. deterrent forces, probably in the range of 80 percent or better.

The system, depending on how many interceptors are used and how many point defenses are included, could be built at a cost of $15 billion to $50 billion, according to responsible estimates. In effect, it would be a military reformer's design for strategic defense: using simpler, cheaper systems instead of complex, high-tech weapons.

Obviously one prime function of such a system would be to shield weapons, not people—a goal very different than the one Ronald Reagan announced for SDI in 1983. But it would be a mistake to see it only in those terms. Even the ERIS system, though not a leakproof shield against thousands of Soviet warheads, would defend people against other threats that are not trivial. It would protect against a more limited strike, launched by accident or, say, by a faction of Soviet generals upset with the Kremlin leadership, or a single Soviet submarine commander. It would therefore allow important changes in U.S. doctrine that could prevent an all-out nuclear war. By shielding "the button"—our vulnerable nuclear command and control centers—a limited defense would undermine those in the Pentagon who argue for launch-on-warning strategies.

SUCH A DEFENSE would also shield against a strike by the Chinese, or the other minor nuclear powers likely to emerge in the coming years. No, it would not defend against the possibility of a suitcase bomb or other covert devices. But surely it would still be of some value to protect ourselves against Third World cruise and ballistic missiles—a technology within the reach of a growing number of countries, according to a recent report by the Congressional Research Service.

This proposal should also have some appeal for those who still cling to the notion of a "peace shield." After all, why does a defense that is going to be several layers thick have to go up all at once? If the country desires to have, someday, a complex defense against nuclear attack, the most likely way to get there will be to build some layers, test them, see how they work; build newer layers, test them, see how they work; and so on.

Then too, whatever its impact on Russian posturing in the near future, such a defense would do some useful things for arms control over the long haul. It would reduce the need for elaborate methods of verification, for example. Today, if the Soviets build 100 mobile missiles, each with three warheads, those missiles can place at risk up to 150 targets in the United States. Facing a defense that is 80 percent effective, the Soviets would need to build not 100 missiles, but 500, to threaten the same targets. Against a 95 percent effective defense—something that might be possible for specific, hardened points—the Soviets would need to stockpile and deploy not 100 missiles, but 2,000.

FINALLY, BY focusing on affordable objectives rather than a grandiose shield, a quick-and-cheap strategic defense would set up a nice incentive for politicians here and generals in the Kremlin. It's quite possible that low-tech defenses would be "cost-effective at the margin." That is, the defenses would be cheap enough so that when the Soviets add one unit of offense, we can respond with a cheaper unit of defense. Two careful studies of this issue sponsored by Los Alamos labs indicate that the overall cost trade-off would favor defense by between 2-to-1 and 5-to-1 for the foreseeable future.

The fact that this kind of low-tech SDI system would work is what has the Soviets worried. For though a leakproof shield is a fantasy, a somewhat leaky shield could be initiated almost immediately. What would be the effect? Caspar Weinberger says that the United States would view Soviet deployment of such a system as a "catastrophe." If one side has a nuclear shield, it can attack the other, yet absorb any surviving forces that are fired back in retaliation. A leaky defense, remember, would allow catastrophic damage if it faced 15,000 nuclear weapons. But what if it was up against only a handful of surviving forces?

Alas, in any crisis, the side without a shield is tempted to strike pre-emptively, while it can at least do some damage. The side with a shield can afford to wait. Thus, Mutual Assured Destruction has been replaced—but not by Mutual Assured Survival. The condition might best be described as Mutual Urgency to Strike Them, or MUST. (All nuclear scenarios, to have any hope of survivability, must be able to be stated in terms of an acronym-producing expression, or APE.)

Yet there are several ways to manage the transition to a world of defense without thus tipping the nuclear balance. The United States could offer to share the technology of defense with the Soviets, perhaps even to deploy agreed-on defenses according to a joint timetable. Such a proposal sounds implausible—indeed, silly. Well, the best way to force Reagan's hand on his silly-sounding offer to give SDI technology away is to take him up on it. Moving SDI into the development and deployment stage would force the president to put up or shut up.

It's also possible that the two countries could build low-tech defenses at a roughly equal pace without any agreement. This approach reveals the virtues of a more gradual approach to strategic defense. It's one thing for the United States to conduct vast research on a near-perfect defense for many years, and then, presumably, pop up the ultimate shield, shifting from no defense to near-total defense overnight. It's another if each side is carrying on marginal, ongoing programs, such as the Soviet Union's existing ABM system. As long as one side doesn't get drastically ahead, there is no danger: just a steady reduction in the destructive capability of each side's offensive arsenal.

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Recent history suggests that this is exactly how the arms race tends to move, with the United States and the Russians advancing in rough tandem. Each country deployed its first nuclear bomb, its first intercontinental missile, its first multiple-warhead missile, and its first defensive radars within a few years of the other. As John Tirman of the Union of Concerned Scientists once told me, "Any advantages turn out to be illusory. The idea that we can race ahead of the Soviets with some technological fix just doesn't hold." Exactly, which is why defense need not be dangerous.

Still, it's possible that the United States would surge ahead in an SDI race. In fact, one reason many hawks don't much mind the idea of sharing SDI technology with the Soviets is that they're convinced they wouldn't be able to get full use of it. "You might as well give the stuff to a monkey," says Daniel Graham, a leading Star Wars proponent.

Even if Graham's view doesn't hold, the Soviets might just resist an SDI race. They might not understand or buy all the arguments about the benefits of mutual defensive deployments. Or the Soviets just might be nasty guys who want to block American defense, figuring they can illegally deploy their own. They might even like the world of mutual assured destruction because it creates such fear in the hearts of Western publics.

There's a third safe way to construct an American defense, however, even if the Soviets refuse to cooperate: as we build up the defense, we dismantle offensive forces unilaterally. After all, it's the number of survivable weapons we have, not the total number of weapons, that determines whether we have a stable balance. One hundred survivable missiles are worth more than 1,000 that are completely vulnerable.

Indeed, as defenses become highly effective, it becomes possible to maintain only a bare-minimum deterrent, say, several fields of nuclear bombers. By protecting the fields of bombers, the United States retains a deterrent, yet one that takes several days to mobilize, and is thus useless for purposes of surprise attack. Eliminating the Soviet fear of our surprise attack makes us safer, too.

All of these arguments have met with much scorn from Star Wars opponents. It does seem hard to believe that the hawks are serious when they talk about giving away technology (Ronald Reagan) or unilaterally scrapping offensive forces (Zbigniew Brzezinski) or abolishing all nuclear weapons (Robert Jastrow). On the other hand, it seemed silly several years ago to think SDI would come so far, or that the hawks would be making these arguments, even in jest. It seemed the Soviets might never negotiate while SDI research moved ahead and U.S. missiles remained in Europe.

Polls show that about two-thirds of all Americans favor a nuclear freeze. Yet by a similar proportion they seem to favor construction of at least some defense against nuclear weapons. There seems to be, in other words, a desire to build up defense and build down offense—a desire that neither party has addressed in a program that does both. Is Star Wars a bargaining chip? Maybe. But it's just possible that the best deal to be had is right here at home.

GREGORY A. FOSSEDAL

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Arms control, not disarmament, is the key.

STABILITY FOR TWO

BY ALBERT GORE JR.

PRESIDENT REAGAN and his staff have had an extraordinarily hard time explaining in a coherent way exactly what took place at Reykjavik. In the immediate aftermath of the meeting, Reagan, Chief of Staff Donald Regan, and Secretary of State George Shultz all clearly said we had reached a tentative agreement to eliminate *all* nuclear weapons, but that it and several other "tentative agreements" fell through because of a last-minute dispute with the Soviets over strategic defense. No sooner had this startling news been announced than the clarifications began. The entire event was quickly reinterpreted as if it were a screenplay being rewritten as the movie was filmed. "Deep disappointment" became exhilaration. "Tentative agreements" became offers too bold for the other to accept. The original version is now like a lost weekend.

What did happen? Well, some things are clear. There is no dispute that on Sunday afternoon, during the fourth and final negotiating session, both sides tentatively agreed to reduce all offensive strategic nuclear weapons by 50 percent over five years, and that President Reagan then

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formally offered to continue those reductions down to zero in a second five-year period for ballistic missiles only. That would have left each side with bombers and cruise missiles, both air- and sea-launched. There is no dispute that General Secretary Gorbachev rejected this offer and counterproposed that during the second five-year period we reduce all strategic nuclear weapons to zero.

What was agreed to next is very much in dispute. In the first public statement after the meeting, Shultz said, "During this ten-year period, in effect, all offensive strategic arms and ballistic missiles would be eliminated." But when he got back to Washington, he told a group of senators it was "unclear" what would have been eliminated. In a White House meeting two days after the meeting, the president responded to a question from Senator Sam Nunn designed to clear up the same point by nodding to indicate that, yes, he had tentatively agreed to eliminate "all" nuclear weapons. But there followed a string of assertions and denials from key administration officials, all aimed at establishing that the president had not gone beyond his original proposal to do away with all ballistic missiles in ten years. White House spokesman Larry Speakes said the president misspoke, then later said that he (Speakes) had misspoken about the president's having misspoken and that instead the president was misunderstood.

Now the Soviet Union has released direct quotes from President Reagan based upon their translator's notes that indicate he did agree tentatively to eliminate all nuclear weapons. No wonder people are baffled.

Similarly, with regard to intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF), we have been told that there was tentative agreement to reduce the number of warheads on such systems to 100 on each side, with zero on each side in Europe and with the Soviet Union's 100 INF warheads to be deployed atop 33 SS-20 missiles stationed in Asia, and with our 100 INF warheads on weapons to be located in the United States.

BUT ONE OF the questions of greatest concern to our allies in Europe has to do with the role of Soviet shorter-range intermediate nuclear forces. This question is significant because the Soviet Union has been in the process of upgrading the accuracy of such weapons, and could in some ways use them to substitute for the SS-20s that would be withdrawn and dismantled. Apparently the Soviets proposed a freeze of such systems at their current level, if—and only if—we would accept a freeze at our current level. It is of some importance to our allies to note that our current level of shorter-range intermediate nuclear forces is zero.

There is disagreement among our negotiators about whether our "tentative agreement" over INF—which was trumpeted as a great bargain—included the idea of a freeze at currently deployed levels on both sides for short-range INF systems. If it did, then the Soviet Union and its allies would have enjoyed a very heavy advantage in such capabilities, to which nothing comparable would exist on the NATO side. There is also disagreement about whether or not a meeting of the minds took place on how to limit nuclear testing. We say it did. The Soviets deny it.

Finally, there is even room for doubt as to the precise U.S. position on SDI. One would have thought that on this point, at least, there would be utter clarity. And yet, in the president's departure address at Keflavik Air Base in Iceland, he explicitly said: "So long as both the United States and the Soviet Union prove their good faith by destroying nuclear missiles year by year, we would not deploy SDI." There is presumably a way to reconcile this remark with the president's frequent statements since then of utter determination to deploy SDI no matter what, but it has not yet been offered.

THE REYKJAVIK MEETING spun out of control because it was poorly conceived and poorly planned. Indeed, the very idea of a "pre-summit" should have invited skepticism. It is clear that a meeting in mid-October was viewed strategically by the Soviets as a way to maximize the leverage they might have on President Reagan, and to increase the odds that he would be tempted to accept some bargain right before the election that he would not otherwise accept. The Soviets had proposed an October date as early as last spring and Reagan had always rejected it.

During the swirl of activity surrounding the Daniloff swap, Gorbachev suddenly proposed a "pre-summit" to take place right before the elections. Reagan abandoned his earlier instinct and agreed. He compounded his timing error by giving his advisers little chance to prepare the U.S. position in detail. And to top it all off, he didn't even seek an understanding about the precise agenda for the meeting.

It is clear that the Soviets came far better prepared for the encounter. For the past six years, the president has been unable or unwilling to put a stop to the open civil war in his administration about virtually every aspect of strategic policy and U.S.-Soviet relations. On short notice, all these accumulated confusions, imprecisions, and bureaucratic rivalries were thrown, as it were, into briefcases and flown along with the president to Reykjavik. No wonder the Soviets thought they had the upper hand.

As a result of this continuing disarray, the world has been treated to a kind of trapeze act, in which, without benefit of a net, the president has proposed to let go of one swing even before the other is in view. In such a fashion, he has insisted on abandoning deterrence for defense; actual SALT constraints for a problematic START agreement; and the ABM Treaty for his dream of a nearly perfect "peace shield."

However, if nothing else, the president's conduct at Reykjavik does force us to confront an issue at once central and neglected. What do we really want from arms control? The implications of the more spectacular disarmament proposals, whether the president's (the complete abolition of ballistic missiles in ten years) or Gorbachev's (the complete abolition of all nuclear weapons in the same span of time) go well beyond a change in weaponry and would occur well ahead of any hoped-for maturation in the U.S.-

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Soviet relationship. Reykjavik could turn out to have been a psychological, if not a diplomatic, watershed. It has jolted people into questioning not just the president's purposes, but their own.

The idea of abandoning ballistic missiles will be given much more serious analysis in our country, and has already caused an intellectual schism in the pro-arms-control community. But the effort is largely wasted—because there is no chance whatever that the Soviets will seriously consider abandoning the one category of weapons in which they have an advantage while leaving in place our superior Stealth bombers and cruise missiles.

Under either proposal Western Europe would be exposed to the intimidation inherent in the huge Soviet advantage in conventional forces. This would pose a direct threat to the United States' position as the leader of an effective coalition of free nations. And quite possibly, either outcome might eventually pose a direct threat to peace in Europe. For this purpose, it would not matter whether the United States retained or relinquished its strategic bombers and cruise missiles. The United States would no longer be in a position to use its strategic forces as the ultimate assurance for Western Europe's independence and security.

Are these fears overstated? Are they outweighed by the tantalizing hope of a world without nuclear weapons? When Jonathan Schell posed these questions, they seemed hopelessly remote. Now that Ronald Reagan is posing them, they still seem remote. And even now we are forced to reassert painfully the judgment of an earlier generation: in spite of the awful risks, we will not abandon these weapons until our allies are made safe from Soviet intimidation by other means. That having been said, it is also clear that this judgment is becoming more difficult and progress is urgently needed in enabling NATO to hold its own with conventional forces.

WHAT, THEN, of the comparatively more modest proposals for zero INF forces in Europe and for "deep reductions" in strategic forces? The famous zero-zero INF option was devised by the administration in 1983, not as an optimal response to NATO's requirements, but as a way to deal with internal allied political conflict, and to outbid the Soviet Union—at least for a time—in an auction for political support in Europe. Ever since it was first propounded by the president, the almost universal view has been that this idea was good for show only. Then suddenly, at Reykjavik, the president found himself presented with—as Gorbachev put it—"your own baby."

The zero option will leave Europe hostage to other nuclear delivery systems based in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe, more reliant than ever on the U.S. strategic nuclear shield—which, however, will have been thinned out to the point where it is no longer credible, save as a deterrent against attack on the territory of the United States itself. The zero option therefore points toward the kind of "no first use" regime the Soviets have sought, and the United States has resisted. Is it, finally, the prelude to a neutral Europe? Privately, NATO leaders bitterly oppose the removal of all INF forces. But publicly, they mute their objections.

As for strategic forces, somewhere along the line the president has lost one of his original objectives, which included not only "deep reductions" but also "stability." Nowhere in his account of the so-called 50 percent reduction proposal does the president indicate how the stability is to be achieved. If we are interested in improving stability, we should try to design the reductions in a way that makes it impossible for either side to gain even a theoretical advantage from a first strike on the other. It would not improve stability if missile-launching submarines were to be substantially reduced in number while anti-submarine warfare continued as a major priority for both sides. Sharp cuts in bombers might undermine deterrence since the Soviets have massive anti-aircraft defenses and we have virtually none.

Ironically, Congress understands what the administration does not—that the Midgetman missile is the best means to assure the survivability of our missile force, and the best hedge against threats to bombers and submarines. Moreover, the Midgetman not only makes a Soviet first strike impossible, it simultaneously diminishes Soviet fears of American nuclear superiority. By contrast, even a limited version of SDI, also designed to frustrate a Soviet first strike, raises overwhelming Soviet anxiety about American efforts to gain superiority and destabilize the entire arms race. Yet nothing seems to have survived at Reykjavik of the Scowcroft Commission's plan to fuse arms control and modernization into a single instrument of policy. Nothing seems to have been said about the need to shift forces away from reliance on MIRVed ballistic missiles toward more stable arrangements. Why bother with costly and time-consuming changes of this sort, when SDI will magically balance all accounts?

Yet the fear of a first strike remains at the center of each superpower's strategic concerns. And until we focus intently on that seminal fear and carefully deal with its causes, we will be missing the main point. Ironically, it was to reassure the Soviets about their fear of a first strike that Reagan came to his proposal for eliminating all ballistic missiles. Surely, he told Gorbachev, if there were no longer any such weapons, then there could be no basis for the Soviet view of SDI as part of a U.S. first-strike capability. And perhaps, in some very theoretical way, he is right. In response, Gorbachev wanted to know of what use SDI would be after the elimination of all ballistic missiles. Thus arose the stalemate that was blamed for costing the chance for "real progress."

TO ACHIEVE THIS real progress, we need an agreement for arms control, rather than complete disarmament on short notice. We and the Soviets have it in our power to reshape our forces not only through reductions, but through a combination of modernization and carefully crafted arms control designed to remove the fear of a first strike, even as a theoretical possibility. That change by

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itself would be proof that negotiations can lead to a step-by-step reduction in the risk of war. It could clear the way for a more mature U.S.-Soviet political relationship, which is, in turn, the prerequisite for more far-reaching reductions, preferably in the nuclear *and* conventional forces opposed to each other in Europe.

The administration may well go for broke, showing interest only in perfect outcomes involving nuclear disarmament, rejecting any progress in the near term, no matter how seemingly attainable. In that case, the best would truly be the enemy of the merely better. And such a result would please those within the administration who view arms control of any sort as a snare and a delusion.

What we need to do instead is to build on the fragmentary accomplishments of Reykjavik. We should try to pick up apparent Soviet concessions on such matters as verification in INF, the duration of an INF agreement, and a phased approach to new limits on nuclear testing. We also ought to be thinking about how to respond to Soviet concessions on such significant technicalities as the rules for how to count bombers. And, of course, we should actively explore any positive signs that the Soviet Union is willing to drop or reasonably modify its demand for restricting SDI to the laboratory.

The first priority is for the administration to reconsider gracefully its stated intention to exceed the limits of SALT II immediately after the election. The president will be hounded by right-wing opponents of arms control to carry through with his threat, but there are grounds for him to change his decision while remaining consistent with his original statement. He said in June that the two criteria on which he would base a re-evaluation of his decision would be a more forthcoming Soviet posture in arms control and progress on compliance. Who can deny, after hearing the president's own account of what happened at Reykjavik, that the Soviets have met the first condition? And their ready acceptance of new verification measures for INF and nuclear testing (and earlier, in the Stockholm negotiations, for on-site inspection of military maneuvers in Soviet territory) may indicate there is new hope for progress on compliance.

Of equal importance, we must work to shore up the 1972 ABM Treaty, by negotiating reasonable constraints on research instead of attempting to pursue our new "anything goes" interpretation. These steps, along with a central focus on eliminating first-strike fears, may seem limited when compared to the sweeping agenda discussed at Reykjavik. But they are not incompatible with those longer-range goals. Rather, they are necessary steps toward the creation of a new world with larger possibilities.

A triumph of American unilateralism.

REYKJAVIK AND THE END OF DAYS

BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

AMERICANS, LUIGI BARZINI once observed, are given wholeheartedly neither to isolationism nor to interventionism, but to "impatient isolationism"—brief, decisive action that will allow them to return to what Theodore Roosevelt disdainfully called "the soft and easy enjoyment of material comforts." Barzini's is not an eccentric, European view. Walter Lippmann made much the same observation in the early '50s. Americans view conflict, he argued, as a violation of the natural order of things, a form of impropriety, indeed, criminality ("an outrage upon our privacy and upon our rights . . . rebellion against the universal order") that must energetically be suppressed, so that we can re-establish "necessary conditions of the everlasting peace in which we could again disarm ourselves and could again relapse into a private and self-regarding existence."

Rarely have the "necessary conditions of the everlasting peace in which we could again disarm ourselves" been as energetically pursued as at the Reykjavik summit. And the vehicle this time for America's "impatient isolationism"—the bold strike that permits a return to the safe tending of vineyards—is the idea of strategic defense.

The isolationist impulse is most often associated with the left. But it has always been a very strong strain within conservatism as well. For example, Democratic leaders (Mike Mansfield, Sam Nunn) do periodically call for a reassessment and perhaps withdrawal of American troops from Europe. But the most persistent and uncompromising advocate of withdrawal is Irving Kristol. Allies are a drag on the idea of a vigorous, unfettered America. And unilateralism (not as many critics mistakenly believe, blind interventionism) is the conservative program: America acting alone. A key element is America protected—from nuclear missiles; from the demands and needs of weak, entangling allies; above all, from the demands of mutuality and of jointly (with the Soviets) tended stability that is the essence of deterrence. Under a nuclear astrodome, Americans can say to hell with all these

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entanglements. Hence the need, the passion, for SDI.

This, of course, is not the only meaning of SDI. Its attractiveness derives from other sources too. SDI offers a vision of an effectively non-nuclear world; it represents a faith in the ability of technology to conquer diplomacy, even history; it expresses the eternal American hope of transmuting scientific energy into power, peace, or whatever else is on the political agenda. All of this is true, and all of this has been amply noted elsewhere. But what often goes unnoticed is the relationship of SDI to American unilateralism with all its isolationist undertones.

AFTER REYKJAVIK, this relationship can no longer go unnoticed. The president's original vision of SDI as a nuclear astrodome over the United States (and, in a later version, an astrodome over the Soviet Union too) undertakes to restore the United States to the invulnerability it enjoyed in the splendid isolation of the pre-nuclear age. That an American president should pursue that vision is in itself enough to give American allies the jitters. With the homeland so unilaterally protected, why would—why should—the United States persist in exposing itself to danger by leaving trip wires in places such as Germany and Korea?

That thought is bad enough. Worse is what Reagan appeared prepared to bargain away in order to save SDI. In the last two years since the return of the Soviets to the bargaining table at Geneva, pressure has grown on the administration to view SDI as a bargaining chip, and to exchange it for a "grand compromise" involving serious and drastic cuts in offensive arms. As Reykjavik approached, the administration began to do the opposite: it looked for other chips, accumulated during Reagan's six-year military buildup, to bargain away to save SDI.

One such chip is Euromissiles. In the weeks before Reykjavik, the administration seemed intent on wrapping up an arms control agreement on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe. Partly on the merits, but partly also to deflect pressure to give up SDI. An INF agreement would be a triumph of sorts. Enough, at least, to get the administration through the next two years without having grandly to compromise on SDI.

Still, the INF deal that was in prospect going into Reykjavik would not completely have denuded Europe of American missiles. It left both sides with 100 warheads. One hundred American weapons might be enough to provide Western Europe with the psychological and symbolic "coupling" that secures the American guarantee to defend Europe. At the same time, such a dramatic cut in the inventory of Euromissiles (sixfold in the American case, 15-fold in the Soviet case) would greatly reduce nuclear anxieties that have been feeding anti-NATO sentiment in Europe.

In Reykjavik, in 11 hours of sweeping and reckless bargaining, Reagan agreed to much more. To the abolition of all INF missiles in Europe. To the reduction by 50 percent of all strategic nuclear weapons within five years. And to the abolition within ten years of all ballistic missiles. This last was Reagan's idea. To which Gorbachev countered by proposing the abolition within ten years of all strategic nuclear weapons, period. The administration has since given several versions of this discussion, but now concedes that Reagan agreed. The end of days was scheduled for 1996.

Apart from the merits of these mind-boggling offers is the motive: they were proposed to save SDI. It happened like this. The president offered a 50 percent reduction in offensive missiles within five years. Gorbachev accepted, but demanded restrictions on SDI. Reagan tried to preempt Gorbachev's opposition to SDI by proposing the Abolition: a world without ballistic missiles. In such a world, Reagan argued, how can SDI be a threat? It can only be a threat in a world with ballistic missiles. Then, if one side has a shield, it might strike first, with a fair degree of confidence that a degraded enemy force, facing even a partial strategic defense, might not be able to inflict significant retaliatory damage. That scenario, which is the Soviet nightmare, and which, according to Secretary Weinberger, would be ours were the situation reversed, is abolished by the abolition of ballistic missiles. (Interestingly, this blueprint for the end of the nuclear age is not terribly different from Jonathan Schell's. In *The Abolition* his vision is of a non-nuclear world in which deterrence is provided by the knowledge and ability to rebuild nuclear weapons, augmented perhaps by some strategic defense.)

What's wrong with this picture? As a defense of SDI, it makes no sense. If ballistic missiles are indeed abolished, SDI has no use. When Gorbachev put this to Reagan, he answered that it would be used as "insurance" against cheating or against third parties. But if that is the case, if what we have to fear is a lone missile coming from Libya or a clandestine arsenal of a dozen missiles coming out of some cave in the Soviet Union, then there is no need for the exotic space-based technologies that SDI is designed to research and ultimately deploy. A relatively simple system that uses existing, *ground-based* technology would do. The Army has already tested a "homing overlay experiment" in which a non-nuclear, kinetic projectile destroys an incoming warhead by colliding at very high speed. Lockheed is developing an interceptor with a range of 2,500 miles (ERIS, exoatmospheric re-entry vehicle interceptor subsystem). As James T. Hackett, a former acting director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency under President Reagan, points out, such an ABM system deployed at one site in the north central United States could provide some protection for nearly all of North America. If the idea is "insurance" in a world free of ballistic missiles, the current massive, exotic, space-based SDI program is unnecessary.

BUT GRANT THAT the president's idea of abolishing nuclear missiles as part of a "defensive transition" to SDI makes sense. What kind of bargain is it?

Start with the extreme case, the Gorbachev proposal with which the president concurred: the abolition of all strategic nuclear arms, ballistic and otherwise. Assume that there is some adequate way to verify this arrangement.

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The effects on Western defense would be catastrophic. For two reasons.

First, the abolition of offensive nuclear weapons means the end of the Western alliance, nothing less, and the Europeans know it. That they have said so only obliquely is testimony to their tact and their pragmatism. They do not seek to embarrass a president already thrust in a sticky political situation by the summit outcome. And they are experienced enough to realize the idea is too crazy to come to pass. So why create alliance problems by raising public objections?

The objections are straightforward. The West chose a nuclear deterrent for its defense against an overwhelming preponderance of Soviet conventional power. After 40 years, that fact remains. Remove offensive nuclear weapons ("down to [nuclear] artillery," reported Donald Regan), and how will Europe be defended? Faced with this obvious question, Secretary Shultz has argued repeatedly since Reykjavik that (*a*) he has confidence in our conventional deterrent, and (*b*) the West has the GNP and the manpower to build up to Soviet levels in time for the Abolition.

The need to add point (*b*) diminishes the credibility of point (*a*). And point (*b*) itself has no credibility at all. Democracies don't like to spend money on defense in peacetime, and it is reckless to believe that they are about to consent to the dramatically increased cost of a conventional buildup. Nuclear weapons are cheap. That is precisely why they were chosen as the preferred means of defense for 40 years. In wartime or during periods of fear and tension (such as the early '80s), a buildup is possible. But détente is the enemy of rearmament. (This point, by the way, was a centerpiece of the conservative attack on Nixon-Kissinger détente and the SALT regimes.) To expect the West vastly to increase its defense spending for a conventional deterrent while the most massive cooperative disarmament effort in history is going on between the United States and the U.S.S.R. is to expect—and to stake the defense of the West on—a political miracle.

Nor does this idea have to go into effect before it begins to undermine the alliance. The very fact that an American president, closeted with a Soviet leader, could make such an offer, Yalta-like, over the heads of Europe, is a threat to Europe, and in particular to European elites that have defended the alliance against the pacifist left. It constitutes the worst undermining of Atlanticists in Europe since Jimmy Carter's offer and then withdrawal of the neutron bomb. But in comparison with Reagan's sweeping disarmament offer at Reykjavik, Carter's action was a trivial faux pas.

A defended America, a non-nuclear world, and a Europe out in the cold. A unilateralist's dream. And enough to make those living under the American umbrella from Berlin to Seoul think twice about having invested their security in the American connection.

SECOND, THE anti-nuclear vision that floated about Reykjavik fails on its own unilateralist terms. It is more than just an alliance buster. It is a danger to American security. The reasons are simple. Whatever a non-nuclear world means, it means a world without *American* nuclear weapons. It also means a world that retains nuclear knowledge. That means a world in which third parties are sure to acquire nuclear weapons and in which the Soviet Union might hide them. The asymmetry regarding verification is crucial. One can be sure that if all strategic systems (or just ballistic missiles) were abolished, it would be extremely unlikely that they could be made clandestinely in the United States. A model of the F-19 Stealth fighter, a classified plane that is not even supposed to exist, can be found—in toy stores. In a country where verification is carried out by the *Washington Post* in conjunction with Toys-R-Us, it is exceedingly difficult to imagine that a nuclear missile will remain hidden for long. Nor would an "insurance" SDI protect us. There are a host of ways to deliver a nuclear weapon that SDI could do nothing about: bomber, cruise missile, depressed trajectory submarine-launched ballistic missile, suitcase. The only deterrent for these is American bombs. The United States must always retain an offensive deterrent capacity. Any proposal to the contrary is reckless nonsense. And once it is conceded that we must always retain a deterrent capacity, we are back, as Henry Kissinger points out, to square one of arms control: What level and what kind of nuclear force is needed for adequate deterrence?

THE PRESIDENT now says that he did not acquiesce to Gorbachev's reckless nonsense about abolishing all strategic weapons. But Reagan's own proposal for abolishing ballistic missiles within ten years, though not quite nonsense, is still reckless. Why would we want to do it? How does it enhance our security? There are several answers.

(1) Without ballistic missiles the Soviets cease to be a superpower and are revealed to be a primitive, third-rate, economic basket case. False. The Soviets would still control the strongest conventional force in the world. They also retain their blue-water navy; an impressive airlift capacity; and a series of strategic, cooperative, and energetic colonies, starting with Cuba and Vietnam, to reinforce their ability to project power in the world. Nuclear weapons enhance Soviet power, but no more, perhaps less than they do ours. The Soviets' true claim to superpower status lies not in their SS-18s but in their ability to organize a command society that will support an enormous conventional force with a worldwide projection capacity, a force that is fully comparable and in many ways superior to that of the United States.

(2) The United States is ahead of the Soviets in non-ballistic technologies, meaning air power and cruise missiles. True, but we are far behind the Soviets in defense against these technologies. The Soviets have the most effective air defense system in the world, and we have practically none. And the United States is not about to build a massive air defense system, particularly not in an atmosphere of ballistic missiles disarmament.

What would the strategic equation look like after ballistic missiles were abolished? The Soviets would face no Ameri-

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can ballistic missiles force and they would have the world's best air defense. It is not clear, even to advocates of ballistic missiles disarmament, that ten years hence American penetration aids will enable bombers and cruise missiles to get through Soviet air defenses. In which case, concedes Stansfield Turner, we would have to retain some ballistic missiles as reserve. Which brings us back again to the question of how many and what kind make for an adequate deterrent.

Does such an arrangement free us from our present predicament, from what the president likes to call the "immoral" doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction? Not in the least. We will simply have exchanged delivery vehicles, ballistic missiles for bombers and cruise missiles. True, air-breathing systems are slower and recallable. But that is a high price to pay for giving up the essence of deterrence: "assured destruction" will not have been abolished, only its mutuality. Without ballistic missiles and with fairly good Soviet air defenses, the American ability to launch a retaliatory attack on the Soviets would be in question. The Soviet ability to launch an attack on the United States without air defenses would not be. And our SDI in the sky would be worse than useless: it would be poised to intercept ballistic missiles that do not exist.

The administration's end-of-days proposal makes sense only if it is accompanied by massive conventional rearmament (to safeguard the allies) and a massive new continental air defense (against non-ballistic nuclear attack). Amid administration talk of the rosy anti-nuclear "agreements" the president is said to have made at Reykjavik, we hear little about the first and nothing about the second. Which makes Reagan's proposal at best unserious, at worst dangerous.

Coming out of Reykjavik, the press, as obsessed with SDI as the president, missed this story. The real story was what the president agreed to, not what he turned down. And what he agreed to was his own "grand compromise": offering to jeopardize the alliance and the structure of deterrence in exchange for saving SDI, an SDI that by then would have the most limited and trivial of roles in a non-ballistic world. This "compromise" only makes sense when understood as a product of the deepest unilateralist longing. Thus it was with relief that a German official noted that the Reykjavik talks "were broken off at the right time"—meaning, before Gorbachev could say yes.

AS FOR SDI itself, the president proposed a ten-year moratorium on deployment; Gorbachev a ban on everything except laboratory research starting immediately. For the next few days, this dispute will be portrayed as a matter of principle. Going into the election, Reagan has found that SDI is good politics.

But, in fact, this dispute is only a matter of principle so long as SDI remains undefined. There are several SDIs. The most important of which, to borrow terminology from the four famous anti-SDIers (McGeorge Bundy, George Kennan, Robert McNamara, and Gerald Smith), are SDI 1, a space-based population defense, and SDI 2, a ground-based, mostly missile defense system. (SDI 3 is the minimal "insurance" screen that Reagan proposes for after the banning of ballistic missiles. SDI 4 is the Soviet nightmare of post-ballistic, space-based, high-tech *offensive* weapons, like particle beams or rail guns, which might be developed by the United States under the pretext of developing defensive weapons. But why the United States should disguise the development of offensive weapons, which are not restricted by treaty, as defensive weapons, which are tightly restricted by the ABM Treaty, is a mystery. Even if Gorbachev killed the SDI program, particle beam and other such exotic research for offensive weapons could proceed unmolested.)

ONCE THE PROBLEM is parsed, it becomes soluble. A reasonable solution is for SDI 1 to be restricted to research, and for SDI 2 to be permitted to go to the development and testing stages during the next ten years. This in return for significant and stabilizing offensive cuts. But that is the rub. The problem is not with the SDI side of "grand compromise," but with the other side as it emerged from Reykjavik.

It is a mistake to take all intermediate-range nuclear missiles out of Europe. Gorbachev's "concession" of accepting the zero option is, in fact, an unwise concession on our part. There should be a token INF force in Europe to secure the coupling of the United States to the defense of Europe.

Furthermore, the idea of cutting offensive strategic missiles to 50 percent is attractive, but only if the details are right. A 50 percent across-the-board cut of all existing systems does little except offer a certain psychological relief that the "arms race" is under control. Strategically, however, it poses problems. As Thomas Schelling points out in a defense of classic deterrence (*Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1985-86), no one has yet presented a cogent argument showing how simply cutting numbers increases security. In fact, if *only* numbers are cut, security can be jeopardized. The reason is obvious. A huge inventory of warheads provides a redundancy that assures not that the ruble will bounce (though that too) but that the force will survive any conceivable pre-emptive strike. As numbers are reduced, the premium for cheating or for pre-emption rises proportionately. What contributes most to nuclear stability is not absolute numbers, but ratios, in particular the ratio of warheads to delivery vehicles. The more warheads per vehicle (the Soviet SS-18, for example, carries ten warheads per missile), the greater the reward for pre-emption. The safest regime—and the goal toward which any offensive arms deal should be tending—is a ratio of 1-to-1. (In a world of only single warhead missiles, the incentive for a first strike is zero.) Thus, while a 50 percent cut sounds attractive, the proof is in the sublimits (on heavy multiwarhead missiles, for example). God is in the details. For any grand compromise to be worthwhile, it is the sublimits, not the eye-catching overall cut, that will tell.

If, then, at Geneva, the details on offensive weapons are reasonable, should we bargain away SDI, or should we insist on what the administration calls a "transition to defense"? The transition to defense is a very attractive idea in

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Issues of the Information Age:

PROMISES KEPT, PROMISES TO KEEP.

At the beginning of this century, Theodore N. Vail, president of AT&T, understood his competition not just as other telephone companies, but as distance, loneliness, separation. He foresaw that the success of his company could end the geographic isolation of man. And, in ending that isolation, the company's success would be assured. The vision became reality: by the mid-'70s, America had universal telephone service.

Today, as the Information Age has begun, there is a new kind of isolation. People are awash in a mounting sea of information, yet unable to connect or work with information in an orderly, useful form; that is, with the world's knowledge. Often, information machines do little to help. They are difficult to use, rigid in their demands, generally unable to work with any but their own kind.

To overcome this new kind of isolation, we have a new vision: to make the Information Age universal, to help build a worldwide Telecommunity, not just open to all, but inviting.

At AT&T, we are now working toward the day when people around the world will be able to handle information in any form—conversation, data, images, text—as easily as they make a phone call today. And they will be able to get information in a form they can use, whenever they need it, from wherever it is.

We envision a vast global network of networks, the merging of communications and computers, linking devices so incredibly capable, they will bend to the will of human beings, rather than forcing humans to bend to theirs.

Obviously, no one company, no one nation, can universalize the Information Age. It will take the best minds of many companies and many nations. The needs of our customers are creating imperatives for our industry. We need common standards and compatibility. We need national and international policies that are open and encouraging. And we need to make information machines far easier to use.

We have the science to construct the systems now. The technology is rapidly taking shape.

We are dedicating our minds, our energy, our resources—our future—to making Telecommunity a reality.

To bringing the best of the Information Age to the world.

Our vision has its roots in AT&T's heritage of service. Just as the telephone extended the reach of the human voice, Telecommunity will extend the reach and capability of minds and talents.

Telecommunity is our goal. Technology is our means.℠

We're committed to leading the way.

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theory and in reverie. It is only under scrutiny that it fails.

A strategic defense that protects populations would abolish deterrence. Anything less than that and a "defensive transition" becomes merely a means—one means among many—to "complicate" an enemy attack, i.e., a means to enhance deterrence (MAD, if you like). And if that is the case, then strategic defense should be evaluated along traditional non-apocalyptic criteria: How does it complicate an attack? Does it do so better than other means? What are the vulnerabilities of this way of complicating attack? etc.

Viewed in this light, the primacy accorded strategic defense by the president is misplaced. A defense, ground-based and oriented toward defending military targets (SDI 2), is a useful adjunct to other ways of securing a deterrent force. But it is neither a panacea nor a novelty. SDI would then take its place with deceptive basing, with hardening, with mobility, with going to sea, as ways of ensuring the survival of a retaliatory force.

A space-based SDI 1, on the other hand, would contribute to strategic instability. Vulnerable to attack and prone to breakdown (we should have learned something from the Challenger disaster), such a defensive transition would provide at best an unstable equilibrium. Active defense is inherently more fragile than passive defense (e.g., adding mobility to missiles). If the idea is to complicate an attack, there are better ways to do it, particularly through arms control. If strategic defenses are really going to be shared, or, at the least, mutually acquiesced to through bilateral agreement, there are other kinds of bilateral agreements that would complicate attacks even more thoroughly. An agreement to reduce the ratio of warheads to launchers complicates an attack without ambiguity. A first strike launched through an opponent's SDI might or might not work. A first strike launched against an opponent who has about as many launchers as you have warheads is mathematically certain to fail. The point is that there are many ways to arrange for strategic stability. Transition to defense is perhaps one of them, but neither the most enduring nor the most reliable.

The grand compromise is in our interest. If we can work one out in Geneva with truly stabilizing offensive cuts, we should take it. But for any grand compromise to work, it must, on the SDI side, stoop to definitions. And, on the offensive side, it must submit to reason. When the talk turns to Abolition, we near the danger zone.

After Reykjavik, both sides have begun neatly backpedaling. A good sign. It is already too easy for an American president to lose sight of the world, of allies, of reality, and dream of an America alone and secure. A little house at the edge of an island at the tip of the world has proved far too conducive for such reveries. That tough-guy Reagan should be the latest American to be mesmerized by the "necessary conditions of the everlasting peace in which we could again disarm ourselves" is a nice historical irony. But it is cold comfort for a world that will suffer the consequences of American impatience. With luck, with details, and with non-messianic expectations, we might do better at Geneva.

Behind the bungling, a cunning strategy.

THE UNGRAND COMPROMISE

BY LEON WIESELTIER

THE IMBROGLIO in Iceland has shown the United States to be a country deeply divided against itself in its grip on reality. For a start, the pourparler that became a poor parler has exposed the full measure of Ronald Reagan's absence from the actual. He sat in Hofdi House a kind of thermonuclear Buddhist, lifted above the coils of mortal conflict to a higher state of universal serenity, dead to what is and alive to what ought to be, scuttling the structure of Western security and kindling to a fancy technological fantasy. "Carefree utopianism" was James Schlesinger's accurate description of the president's summitry. All nuclear weapons, according to Reagan; all ballistic missiles, according to more circumspect (but not much more circumspect) American officials—everything was Gorbachev's for the asking, if the asking was not for the Strategic Defense Initiative. And Europe be damned. Even George Shultz, in an uncharacteristic moment of eschatological intoxication, suggested that Europe could be successfully defended with conventional forces. And the intermediate-range missiles, whose deployment in Europe only four years ago was deemed essential not merely for the deterrence of Soviet aggression but for the political and philosophical coherence of the Free World, were suddenly without significance, another easy sacrifice for the salvation of the world.

Ronald Reagan made fools of a lot of people in Reykjavik. The founders of NATO, for example. The defenders of deterrence, for another. There was some consolation to be had in the thought that he had made fools of some of his own people as well. At least the bargaining chip casuists, too, fell in Iceland. Many in Washington have been cozy in the certainty that the Strategic Defense Initiative was upon us for the sake of arms control. SDI would bring the Soviet

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Union back to the table. It was a bargaining chip. Well, it did bring the Soviet Union back to the table. But it was not a bargaining chip. The time is right for the administration's apologists to make the distinction between a bargaining chip and a bargaining spur. SDI was a spur, not a chip. But alas, the distinction was lost on the Russians. They thought a spur was a chip. Thus, when they proposed to restrict the research and the development of space-based systems of strategic defense to "the laboratory," the summit was over.

REAGAN ALSO MADE fools of America's anti-Communists—more precisely, of those among America's anti-Communists who are not fools already. You do not have to succumb to the demonological coarseness of the "Evil Empire" mentality to agree that the Soviet Union is evil and an empire. And you do not have to search the morning sky for signs of a Soviet first strike to recognize that the Soviet Union is a state organized socially and economically around the production of weaponry, and that it is stronger than the United States in many measurements of strength. The ICBM may be all that the Soviet Union does well. But here was Reagan, whose administration has worked long hours to restore a little clarity about the nature of Communism, anticipating the Soviet Union's genial immolation of its own ICBMs, expecting the Soviet Union to reverse its time-honored tradition of offensive strategy in favor of his own dreams of defense, accepting that the Soviet Union's (or anybody else's) reduction to zero could be trusted. (As for the president's promise to share SDI with the Soviet Union, to make a present to the enemy of America's most advanced nuclear technology, well, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were executed for precisely that. By Reagan's reasoning, they should have been awarded Congressional Medals of Honor for making deterrence possible.)

It is hard to imagine Reagan bargaining with the head of a Hollywood studio as insouciantly as he bargained with the head of the Soviet Union. A cheer, then, for SDI. It thwarted perhaps the most irresponsible 36 hours in the history of modern diplomacy. (No doubt Gorbachev knew it would; a restriction of SDI tests to the laboratory had already been futilely proposed at Geneva.) For a few hours, the blissed-out leader of the bummed-out Free World looked bummed out, too. But then it was morning in America again. The president had brought us to the brink of something almost worse than war, he had brought us to the brink of a false peace, but he was cheered. His bumbling was overlooked in favor of his last-minute loyalty to "the laboratory," and this became his "finest hour." In fact, Reagan accomplished inadvertently abroad what he could never accomplish advertently at home: he wrapped the American flag around SDI. Suddenly people who wouldn't know a particle beam if it landed in their front yard (wait, it will) are making particle beams a test of patriotism. And the president, having behaved like the loftiest and the looniest of liberals in Reykjavik, campaigns for Republican candidates by blaming "liberals" opposed to SDI for "hand[ing] over to the Soviet Union free of charge what we refused to hand over across the bargaining table at Reykjavik."

Still, something more dangerous than political demagoguery is in the offing. Reports of the death of the Reykjavik deal appear to have been exaggerated. In its attempt to reverse the political consequences of the summit's lucky collapse, the administration is breathing new life into its terrible terms. The Americans and the Russians insist that the terms are still on the table, that what was started in Reykjavik can be finished in Geneva. But the conclusion of a Reykjavik-like agreement may be a catastrophic mistake. It may have the consequence of making a dangerous world much more dangerous. After all, an arms control agreement must be judged by the contribution it makes to the prevention of nuclear war. The standard, first and foremost, is strategic. But strategy has been overwhelmed by politics and personalities in the torrent of commentary about the summit. Let us tie ourselves to the mast of strategy, then, as we pass between the politicians and the pundits. Reagan and Gorbachev say that the deal is still possible. They have their reasons for saying so. But is this a deal we should want?

THIS CLUMSY CHAPTER in the history of arms control did not begin in Iceland. It was in last summer's epistolary exchanges between Reagan and Gorbachev that the broad outlines of an agreement were broached. The agreement became pompously known as "the grand compromise." The details of the grand compromise were all to come, but the concepts were clear. The Soviet Union would agree to significant reductions in strategic forces, as would the United States. These reductions, moreover, would be to an equal number, which meant that the Soviet Union would agree to surrender a numerical advantage. In exchange for such reductions, the United States would agree to some limitation upon SDI for some period of time. The nature of the limitation would be a matter for negotiation, as would the length of time. (In June Gorbachev proposed a mutual commitment not to abrogate the ABM Treaty for 15 to 20 years. In July Reagan countered with a delay of SDI deployment of five to seven years, with testing permitted in the same period.) But the generally unremarked principle of the grand compromise was: the codification of SDI, of its development and its deployment, by means of arms control. The strategic environment it presaged was a world of offenses and defenses, in which both superpowers would possess considerable arsenals of strategic weapons and space-based systems for the frustration of their use.

The president presented the fullest picture of his nuclear perfectibilianism at the United Nations in late September. "The real purpose of arms control [is] not just to codify the level of today's arsenals, not just to channel their further expansion, but to reduce them in ways that will reduce the danger of war. Indeed, the United States believes the prospect of a future without such weapons of mass destruction must be the ultimate goal of arms control." Reagan moved on to the grand compromise: "We continue to seek a

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50 percent reduction of American and Soviet arsenals, with the central focus on the reduction of ballistic missile warheads." In exchange for these deep cuts:

> First, both sides would agree to confine themselves, through 1991, to research, development, and testing which is permitted by the ABM Treaty, to determine whether advanced systems of strategic defense are technically feasible. Second, a new treaty, signed now, would provide that if, after 1991, either side should decide to deploy such a system, that side would be obliged to offer a plan for sharing the benefits of strategic defense and for eliminating offensive ballistic missiles. This plan would be negotiated over a two-year period. Third, if the two sides can't agree after two years of negotiation, either side would be free to deploy an advanced strategic defense system, after giving two months' notice to the other.

This was the American position as we stumbled toward Reykjavik. According to the *Washington Post* of October 28, it is the American position as we stumble toward Geneva. (Except that the Americans now concede a decade-long delay in the deployment of SDI.) This position rests, however, on two unspoken premises: that the reduction of nuclear weapons will be total and that the protection offered against nuclear weapons will be perfect. Zero, and the shield. Without them the grand compromise makes no sense. In truth, without zero and the shield the accord will probably create more problems than it will solve. What happened at Hofdi House was that the unspoken premises were spoken. Zero and the shield are precisely what Ronald Reagan believes. They are the pillar and the strut of his happy and slovenly vision.

DOES ANYBODY except the president seriously believe in the shield? It is doubtful. The president's vision belongs to the realm of the heart, not to the realm of the mind. But what of zero? A world without nuclear weapons seems like a supremely moral ideal. But it is precisely at this point that the contradiction between strategy and morality is most vivid. The utopian gropings at Hofdi House have brought us face to face with the disgusting truth that we need nuclear weapons. Without them Europe would be overrun, or forever Finlandized. And though the reduction of strategic systems may be desirable, the elimination of them is another matter. "Are we to abandon the invulnerable part of our deterrent," asked James Schlesinger about our submarine-based forces, "and return to the worries of the '50s, when our retaliatory forces consisted of bombers on a small number of bases susceptible to surprise attack?" Moreover, the abolition of ballistic missiles would do nothing about the danger from the other sorts of nuclear systems that would remain. Still more, Schlesinger observed, "Whichever party (there are more than two) successfully cheated and preserved even a fraction of its arsenal could achieve dominance." And finally, "Even if all parties were actually to abide by an agreement to destroy strategic arms, all would, out of sheer prudence, be poised to resume production and development."

"For Western security," Schlesinger soberly concluded, "the nuclear deterrent continues to represent the ultimate reality." It is hard not to recoil at such a conclusion. The argument against nuclear abolition fills you with a sinking Augustinian feeling. Are we acting too mortally, in the defense of deterrence? In living with evil, are we granting evil too much? The line between realism and fatalism is not easy to draw. That the dangers arising from the rejection of deterrence are greater than the dangers arising from the management of deterrence seems obvious. But there are dangers arising from deterrence, too. It is not a virtue, it is a circumstance. And anybody who claims that the circumstance will certainly last forever is a liar; there are no grounds for quite that quantity of confidence. Down, then, with irresponsible tinkerings and tamperings with the "strategic balance." We can do no more than manage it. But someday our children, or our children's children, may curse us for our "realism," for our "responsibility," for our tidy, tragic view of nuclear life.

Sans zero, sans the shield, we are left with a bargain of deep cuts in strategic offensive weapons in exchange for the eventual deployment of space-based defenses against them. In Reykjavik, a whole Saturday's slogging produced some numbers: over five years both sides would shrink their arsenals to an equal level of 1,600 long-range missiles and bombers, with separate limits on the weapons carried by these "delivery vehicles"; and to an equal level of 6,000 warheads carried by ballistic missiles and air-launched cruise missiles, with separate limits on the warheads of ballistic missiles alone and on the warheads of land-based missiles. (The United States went on to propose the complete elimination of ballistic missiles over a second five-year period.)

The magnitude of the Reykjavik reductions would be unprecedented in the history of nuclear arms control. But here's the terrible joke: not even reductions of such a magnitude will fundamentally alter our strategic situation, except possibly for the worse. The crushing fact about quantitative arms control is that it represents a change in degree, not a change in kind. The grand compromise would leave the superpowers with the power to destroy themselves, and their accompanying planet, many times over. Indeed, as Theodore Draper has written, "negotiations invariably hinge on establishing some form of parity. In this world, no one is going to negotiate himself into inferiority or out of superiority." Deep cuts, too, are a way of managing deterrence, not of transcending it.

THERE ARE ONLY two ways in which quantitative arms control can transcend deterrence. It can reduce to zero, as the president insists. Or it can reduce to a level sufficiently low to nullify the redundancy according to which both arsenals have been structured. Sagely structured, too. This redundancy is not a mere numerical excess, an exaggeration of strength owed to the military-industrial complexes of both superpowers. It is, rather, the heart of the matter. If deterrence works, it is because of the certainty of retaliation; and that certainty is created, in turn, by the certainty that neither state's forces are small enough to be lost in a single strike. Strictly speaking, what stays the

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hand of an attacker are not the nuclear weapons on the other side, but the nuclear weapons on the other side that are sure to survive an attack.

Thus it is an illusion that, as Thomas Schelling recently remarked, "smaller numbers are better than bigger ones." Having fewer times more than you need does not make the world any less dangerous than having many times more than you need. And having fewer times less than you need may make the world more dangerous indeed. These are the dirty little secrets of arms control. Of course, the refusal to know them, by politicians or popular movements, is not difficult to understand; the dismantling of thousands of weapons of mass destruction deserves to be a thing of consequence. And it may be, for the politics and the psychology of the Soviet-American relationship. But from the standpoint of strategy, of the prevention of nuclear war, quantitative arms control may be a thing of no consequence at all. Sans zero, sans the shield, at 1,600 missiles and bombers and 6,000 warheads on ICBMs and cruise missiles, we will find ourselves more or less . . . where we are now.

With one colossal difference, however. Sans zero, sans the shield, at 1,600 and 6,000, we will find ourselves more or less where we are now . . . and with defenses in space. The grand compromise, then, comes down to a cunning attempt to outfit SDI with the legitimation of arms control. The American delay in deployment, the five to seven years of testing proposed by the president, is designed only to impress the Soviet Union with "the benefits of the system." And the Soviet delay of 15 to 20 years is designed only to give them a chance to catch up. (They always do.) The grand compromise, in other words, is no compromise at all. Throughout last summer, when the papers were full of breathless reports about the president "bargaining over SDI," the president was doing no such thing. He was merely engaged in a debate about whether the United States would have the right to deploy SDI some time before it was ready or some time after it was ready. (On July 23, though, Leslie Gelb said it straight in the *New York Times*: "Reagan administration officials said today that the central premise of a draft arms proposal to the Soviet Union was that the Russians agree explicitly to the deployment of space-based missile defense systems.")

This explains, by the way, the Reagan administration's ardency about arms control in recent years. Somebody at the White House or the Pentagon finally understood that arms control may provide a paradoxical instrument for making SDI into marble. SDI is not upon us for the sake of arms control, as the bargaining chippers believe. Arms control is upon us for the sake of SDI. Enshrined in an arms treaty, SDI would become politically unimpeachable. Now we have to violate a treaty to get into SDI. Then we will have to violate a treaty to get out of SDI.

BUT IF SDI won't work, runs the objection, why oppose it? Acceding to a little absurdity seems a small price to pay for substantive reductions. Unfortunately, only the shield will not work. Many other things will work. The real question is, what those things are, and whether we should want them to work. Just because we can build something that works doesn't mean we should build it; and it is level-headedness, not Luddism, to say so. For this reason the strategic debate since last summer is a scandal. We have started discussing whether we should have SDI and arms control before we have finished discussing whether we should have SDI. "SDI and arms control" is a dodge, a distraction from the fact that we are designing a new world in almost total darkness. And for that darkness, nobody is to blame: in the matter of SDI, it is almost impossible to know what we are talking about. The state of our knowledge is still primitive. The technological configurations and strategic calculations are vast. Precisely what sort of space-based systems designed to meet what sort of attacks should we deploy? Nobody is saying; but everybody is eager to sign.

THE PRESIDENT'S own grasp of SDI is evidence enough of the intellectual insufficiency upon which he is proceeding. At the United Nations, for example, he confided that "I have offered firm and concrete assurances that our SDI could never be used to deploy weapons in space that could cause mass destruction on earth." Well, maybe not mass destruction. But the notion that SDI is a purely defensive system is an insult to the intelligence. If a laser beam can hit a missile that has been launched, it can hit a missile that has not been launched, too. Between offense and defense, these systems are essentially ambiguous. Consider, too, that the vulnerabilities of strategic systems in space may make the vulnerabilities of strategic systems on earth look trifling. (See "Madder Than MAD," TNR, May 12.) And that is just the beginning of the bad news.

Is it unreasonable, or partisan, or defeatist, to demand the answers to such questions about SDI? Is it a sin against American optimism or American science to want a fuller picture of the world that the president is pressing upon us? Meanwhile, in the ignorant interim, anybody with a rudimentary grasp of what happens when a nuclear weapon explodes should resolve to ruin the party. Research, yes. Even certain kinds of testing, yes. But you research and you test because you don't know what you have, not because you do. Moreover, quantitative arms control is a disappointment, but qualitative arms control is not. We can make nuclear war less likely not by reducing numbers of weapons, but by reducing types of weapons. The ABM Treaty is an example of such an exercise. Until it is proven that serious problems on earth may be solved in space without creating serious problems in space, the ABM Treaty should stand. As for the grand compromise, it is a swindle. The establishment of a slightly less swollen arsenal in exchange for SDI disguises a change in kind as a change in degree. "Liberals," as the president cruelly calls them, should see that he is preying upon their appetite for agreement. It would be a bitter irony of American politics if the arms-control-for-arms-control's-sake silliness of many Democrats secured SDI against the scrutiny it still awaits. This time "liberals" should say no to arms control. A bad deal, as Ronald Reagan used to say in an earlier existence, is worse than no deal at all. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Hustling Again

Craziness and heat are two common factors in Martin Scorsese's work. Whatever a Scorsese film's quality, usually at least one character strains at, or passes, the limits of social responsibility—as in *Taxi Driver, Raging Bull, The King of Comedy*. Heat, sheer caloric manifestation, rather than firm structure, sustains *New York, New York* and *Mean Streets;* heat overwhelms *After Hours*, which was supposed to be a farce-comedy. Scorsese has sometimes been called operatic, by me among others. The term includes craziness and heat. Dr. Johnson defined opera as irrational; and the purpose of opera is to intensify its libretto moment by moment.

The Color of Money
(Buena Vista)

The Color of Money gives Scorsese both chances and challenges for his two dominant qualities. The heat begins with the very first shot under the titles: smoke—a close-up of cigarette smoke—subtler and more inviting than the gush of steam from a manhole at the start of *Taxi Driver*. The heat continues as we move to the protagonist, Fast Eddie Felson, 25 years older than he was in *The Hustler*. He is putting the moves on a former girlfriend, who is behind the bar in a pool hall, at the same time that he vibrates, without watching, to the sound of a strong young player knocking the balls around on a table behind him. Eddie, now a thriving liquor salesman, is focused for us before the film is two minutes old. He lives by his hot drives for money and sex; pool is his compulsion. He no longer plays competitively, but his obsession with pool, as we soon see, makes him risk the security he has.

Those three elements—money, sex, and pool—are outlets for Scorsese's stylistic traits, but pool is also a challenge to them. Quite clearly, what he faced first as director, what he thought through first, was the problem of getting large scale and fire into a sport that doesn't open up theatrically like boxing—it's all hunching, with only one basic motion—and is played before only a small group. Robert Rossen, who directed *The Hustler* in 1961 (and wrote the screenplay), faced that problem, too, and handled it well. Scorsese does better, mostly because of his igniting temperament but also because he has the added instrument of color and the color is in the hands of the excellent German cinematographer Michael Ballhaus. (Ballhaus worked frequently with Fassbinder and first worked with Scorsese on *After Hours*.) Every possible stratagem is used to make the cramped pool tables and the dingy pool halls yield visual richness: theater lighting that takes the prosaic places out of realism into "real" abstractions; varied angles of pool shots and players; varied rhythms within sequences; and, especially, immense close-ups of billiard balls that render them talismanic. Toward the end, when Scorsese starts to worry about being repetitive and starts to hurry the editing, we become aware that he has been grappling with a problem all along, but we can still admire the way he went straight for the challenge and, with Ballhaus, made it produce craziness and heat.

Scorsese didn't deal as well with the screenplay. It's credited to Richard Price, who adapted it from a Walter Tevis novel. (*The Hustler* was adapted from a previous Tevis novel.) Published accounts say that Price wrote every word but conferred constantly with Scorsese and the star, Paul Newman. Whatever Scorsese's contribution was, it didn't rectify the basic trouble: the central idea isn't clearly dramatized. Eddie—now, as he thinks, past the game—discovers a bursting young pool talent, Vince; persuades Vince to accept his tutelage in preparation for the Atlantic City championship event; takes Vince on a tour of small-town pool halls; has trouble getting the rambunctious Vince to obey orders; breaks with Vince; has by now been so re-infected with playing fever that he does what he thought he was too old for—he goes back into the game himself. He himself replaces his vicar.

This theme has a strong sexual counterpoint. Vince is accompanied by his sultry girlfriend, Carmen. The virtually patent sex between the gonadic young pair is vicarious for middle-aged Eddie. Vince's proficiency with cue stick and billiard balls, while Eddie watches, needs no symbolic explication. Neither does the fact that, near the start, Eddie gives Vince an especially good cue stick that he no longer uses. Then, as trouble begins to brew between Eddie and Vince, Eddie's old flame joins him on the road, and when they are really hitting it off together, Eddie doesn't need sexual vicars either.

But the script is so laden with pregnant silences, with sudden actions that are meant to explain themselves later and do so only muddily, that the basic scheme—vicar replaced by the one who chose him—is thinly realized. Equally hurtful is the disproportion between the portentous atmosphere and what happens in it. At the start, when Eddie is trying to recruit Vince, his talk is all pithy aphorism, heavy with promises. A scout who found a prospective heavy-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Mènage. Gerard Depardieu, Michel Blanc, and Miou-Miou in a French frolic about a trio who flout sexual and social convention. Deflates toward the end when it gets plotty, floats while it's insouciant. (Reviewed 11/3/86)

Otello. Verdi's masterwork abridged to two hours, but Placido Domingo's Otello and Justino Diaz's Iago are marvelous nonetheless and make Franco Zeffirelli's film transposition valuable. (10/6/86)

Partisans of Vilna. Interviews with the survivors of the first Jewish resistance against the Germans. Presented with simplicity, how could it help being powerful? (10/20/86)

Sid and Nancy. Lives and deaths of the punk rocker Sid Vicious and his girlfriend. Good acting, writing, direction change it from rock fans' idolatry to a grim, gripping chronicle. (10/27/86)

SK

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weight champion or basketball star could analyze no more keenly nor imply bigger rewards. Eddie insists on 60 percent of the take. What happens then? After all this big-league buildup, they go to pool halls where a take of $150 in bets is considered good, where $4,000 in three weeks is big stuff. Even the prizes in Atlantic City are small in the sports world these days. For pool champions, the real money can't come directly from playing: it must come from side bets and other sources. Sharp Eddie and quick-eyed Vince and hard-eyed Carmen never get near mentioning the kind of money that would make all that opening craftiness seem justified.

Further, Price handles the subplots clumsily. Eddie must have a girlfriend for balance and for the conclusion, but Eddie's telephone calls to her are crudely inserted to keep her "alive" so that when she is wanted, she can appear. There is another pool shark in the opening sequence, cartoon-sly and snuffly, who is miffed because Eddie bypasses him and backs Vince. The snuffly one turns up at the big match in Atlantic City and warns of revenge. This never happens; he isn't seen again. Price just opted for old-fashioned melodramatic ugliness to threaten the world of pretty people, but he (and his uncredited collaborators) never decided how to conclude this strand.

Tom Cruise, last seen exploding with animalism in *Top Gun*, explodes again as Vince. His flourishes of the cue stick, his high jinks when playing, aid the walking penis idea. His girl, or "broad," as she is frequently called, is the sullenly attractive Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, who suggests the rest of the anatomical equation. The weakest casting is of Helen Shaver as Eddie's amour. She is dull.

Paul Newman is, past question, a wonderful actor. A few months ago I saw *The Verdict* again—the third time—just to see him: to see how he creates that boozy lawyer, Galvin, from the first moment; how he designs the long speeches, with actor's instinct, so that we get the double pleasure of the design and its effect. But reseeing *The Verdict* was poor preparation for *The Color of Money*. The screenplay for the earlier film is imperfect, but Galvin is complex and interesting; Eddie Felson is neither. Newman is now too big for this small role. We feel him trying to find a base, a broad and generative base, for Eddie, so that his performance won't be a succession of glinty bits, but the base isn't there. In *The Hustler* young Eddie's affair with the lame, neurotic girl was a carpentered attempt to give this shallow man some depth, but there isn't even any equivalent carpentering this time. My point has nothing to do with pool players as against lawyers; in this instance, Eddie is a meager character compared to Galvin.

In *The Color of Money*, both Newman and Scorsese have to pump hard to make use of their talents, but Scorsese comes off better.

John Singer Sargent at the Whitney.

SOMETHING MISSING

BY JOHN UPDIKE

AMERICANS LIKE in their artists a touch of the hermit crank, of the ascetic; Homer and Hopper had it, and Eakins and Pollock. But not John Singer Sargent: he was too facile, too successful, too professional, too European. The most fashionable of artists in his portrait-painting prime from 1887 to 1907, he turned to murals as a path to higher realms and instead covered his name with a certain polite dust. His death in 1925 (like his life, apparently painless) prompted two large retrospective shows the following year, at the Royal Academy in London and the Metropolitan Museum in New York, but no tribute as generous has been launched for 60 years, until this fall's exhibit at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, which will move on to Chicago's Art Institute early next year. The show is not apt to change people's minds about Sargent, or to secure him a place higher than

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his present honorable position as the creator of some spectacular canvases yet a man who, in the statement formed by his total career, somehow misses. "Yes," Henry James wrote to Thomas Bailey Aldrich in 1888, "I have always thought Sargent a great painter. He would be greater still if he had one or two little things he hasn't—but he will do."

He did do, for his times, and did handsomely for himself in that happy age of weekend grouse shoots and wood-paneled steamship staterooms, and will do for the lines of helpless megashow addicts who curl around the corner of Madison and 76th. But what *were* those little things? We go to the retrospective as if to the sickbed of a very dear and charming friend whose debilitating illness still, distressingly but also rather comically, eludes diagnosis. We stand in front of the paintings waiting for something to happen and wondering why it doesn't, and wondering what it would be if it did. The brush strokes are dashing, the pictorial wit is unfailing, the presence of the subjects in the strongest works, the portraits, is at times astounding.

It was a frequent criticism of Sargent, even as his triumphs and fees mounted, that his portraits lacked psychological depth—not a quality, perhaps, that the sitters were paying for. But in fact who could be more *there*, as a living, gazing presence, than Lady Agnew of Lochnaw, seductively slumped in her white dress and looking out with a contemplative challenge from beneath her dark brows and darker hair, or her companion on the wall (and friend in life), Miss Helen Dunham, nervously glancing away while clasping her pink hands in her lap? The sumptuous wealth of stuffs—long dresses, velvet hangings, flowered furniture—in the society portraits detracts from the intelligent intensity with which the faces are rendered. Elizabeth Swinton sat—stood, really—for a portrait that, meant to be a wedding present, was finished barely in time for her second anniversary; her flushed complexion and plump, bruised-looking lips perhaps show her impatience with the painter as (she reported) he "wasted a lot of time" singing and banging on the piano; but these ripe and unsmiling lips also show the hyperfeminine qualities that may have led the affable if asexual Sargent to dally and flirt.

A woman of a much less peachy type, Mrs. Charles Thursby, is posed in dark brown in a seated position of pronounced tension, as if she is about to leap up past the painter and mount a horse sidesaddle; her level green eyes, rendered with great care, come forward, and her mouth is daringly (for the mouth is the key to likeness) left sketched in paint, a brilliant blurred suggestion. With equal daring, Catherine Vlasto's brow and eyes are left in shadow while the light falls on her neck and right side and the hand that oddly flattens several keys of the piano she leans against. These women, if not psychoanalyzed as Rembrandt and Velásquez and Copley psychoanalyzed some of their sitters, are not cheaply beautified either, and are present as enigmatically and undeniably as real people in a room.

CATHERINE VLASTO, 1897 (HIRSHHORN MUSEUM)

Where female vanity and the pomp of the full-length pose were not involved, Sargent exploited without inhibition the knowledge of the human face that his hundreds of portraits—more than 800, it is thought—had earned for him. He has left the definitive painted images of Henry James, his friend, admirer (with James's usual shrewd reservations), and twin Anglo-American star in London society. The portrait head displayed at the Whitney delicately reveals the something puffy and oppressive about James—a leaden watchful intelligence in the eyes, a domineering mouth partly open as if to resume an endless stream of calculated utterance. The handsome, dramatically shadowed charcoal image of Yeats that the poet commissioned for the frontispiece of his first collected poems is also definitive, and arresting. Sargent's little hasty heads of friends, especially that of Charles Stuart Forbes, do penetrate into personality, and the swaddled image of a Bedouin Arab done during a trip to Egypt in 1890-91 has an iconic force. Sargent's sexual activities and proclivities have not excited any very lively interest among his biographers, but the men of his portraits generally seem more in danger of idealization than the women; compare the notorious portrait of Madame X (Madame Pierre Gautreau) with its companion piece, the portrait of her rumored lover, Dr. Pozzi: the former is so pointed and satiric that Paris howled and the subject declared herself ruined, while the latter is shameless romantic flattery, with a crimson aura of Satanic drag.

Sargent, great diner-out though he was, had an underindulged instinct for the marginal. In Venice, he painted not gondolas but working girls in their dark factory-palazzos, and among his commissioned portraits those of wealthy Jews are strikingly vital. The (to my eye) rather stiff and sickly portrait of Mrs.

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Carl Meyer and her children was greatly admired when displayed, converting even Sargent-doubters to his praise: Henry Adams crustily wrote, "The art of portrait-painting Jewesses and their children may be varied but cannot be further perfected." The two canvases at the Whitney of the Wertheimer family are so warm and engaging as to seem anomalous—the two sisters physically linked with an intimacy more expectable in a mother and daughter, and the genial sly face of Asher Wertheimer, an art dealer and patron of Sargent's, popping up at us out of deep chiaroscuro like a patriarch by Rembrandt. This painting of Wertheimer tells us what we have been missing in even the more admirable of Sargent's portraits: an at-ease emotional possession of the subject that enables him to concentrate on making a painting.

Where no warming familiarity exists, a certain distancing finesse takes over. The icy-white skin and blue-green gown of Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland, repel the eye, as hauteur should, though she is showing even more décolletage than the scandalous Madame X; Marlborough's Arcadian backgrounds have been flattened to a dark green backdrop, a stage set for a fearsomely lovely Titania. The painter's performance is so consummate as to be self-mocking, and the elongation of the body is unreal.

IT WOULD take a larger cross section than the Whitney provides to test my suspicion that Sargent made better portraits of Americans, expatriate or not, than of the English upper classes. But it is hard to imagine an English couple inspiring a canvas as jaunty and sporty as that of Mr. and Mrs. I. N. Phelps Stokes, of New York. Anecdotes about the painting have been preserved. Mrs. Stokes was originally intended to pose wearing a green evening dress, with her hand resting on the head of a Great Dane. One day she came into Sargent's Tite Street studio (the Stokeses, newly married, were visiting London) wearing a summery starched linen skirt and blue serge jacket, and he asked her to pose in that; where her hand had been extended to rest on the dog's head a boater hat appeared on her hip, and her husband, ghostly in a white suit, materialized behind her. Such cheerful improvisations were Sargent's native bent. After the scandal of the Madame X portrait drove him from Paris to London, he curbed his picture-making fancy for the business of what he came scornfully to call

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"paughtraits." The portraits of his that get into art books came early—that of Madame X in 1884, and the casually original and affecting group of the four Boit daughters, done in Boston, in 1882. By contrast, the group of the three Vickers sisters done in Sheffield two years later is a studied and unsteady effort; each face is pursued in a different style, and the surrounding dark space is incoherent.

Nothing, however, prevented him, rich on commissions, from spending summers doing subject paintings out of doors, in his version of the Impressionist manner. Monet, whom he knew and even painted beside, recounted that once Sargent borrowed his palette and was appalled to find no black on it. "How do you do it?" he asked the French master. His own first loyalties, learned from his Parisian teacher Carolus-Duran, were to the Spanish darks of Velásquez and to the darting, flippant brushwork of Franz Hals. His famous canvas *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* (not in the Whitney show) was credited with bringing Impressionism to England in 1886, and did evince at least an Impressionist fidelity to atmospherics, having been painted in 20-minute snatches through the twilight of two summers; but Sargent was only popularly viewed as an Impressionist, and his works along the lines of Monet and Renoir are, by and large, not only weak but ugly.

HIS INABILITY to let go of black and brown shadows gives his outdoor scenes a dour look; they seem much older than the 1880s and '90s, when they were painted. On the other hand, a relatively bright and unmuddy effort like *Millet's Garden* seems crude, in composition and brushwork both. *Garden Study of the Vickers Children*, though something of a breakthrough for him, has, on its dull green ground, the artificial flatness, lifted from Japanese prints, of fin-de-siècle magazine illustration. Green, perhaps, was not Sargent's best color; he had a heavy, acidulous way of painting grass, and the paintings of his that most successfully employed the light, glinting Impressionist palette have little vegetation in them—in *Teresa Gosse*, the elfin little girl is seen against a sky so scrubby as to be abstract, and in *Near the Mount of Olives*, not much is growing on the stony ground. Water, on the other hand, was a congenial substance: the semitransparence of shallow depths distinguishes *Alpine Pool*, and in two rapid paintings of his sister Violet (*Violet Fishing, Autumn on the River*) the barred, monotone reflections in the rippling river seem somehow Sargent's own, an effect he noticed and transcribed without Monet's example controlling him.

Where Courbet rather than Monet haunts the canvas, Sargent could paint a fine plein-air picture. The very early *Oyster Gatherers of Cancale*, with its procession across blue-puddled sand beneath a cloud-patched sky, tastes vividly of salt and air, and *Capri*, of a few years later, makes music visible in the two small figures atop the white wall, a stretched-out chanter and a swinging dancer. Toward the other end of his productive life, he was improving as a watercolorist. *Villa di Marlia, Lucca*, done in 1910, has the kind of purely coloristic life absent from his oil landscapes, and the monumentality that arises—again and again in the work of Cézanne—from sheer honesty of seeing. Of the Venice paintings, *The Sulphur Match* is a perfect, dashing little oil; and a charming anecdotal painting of a birthday party in the Albert Besnard family, with its plump mother daintily cutting the little cake whose candlelight blanches the face of the off-center child, while the father figures as a black cutout on the red background, makes one wonder if Sargent, had he stayed in France, might not have joined and enriched that stagestruck, semicaricatural line from Daumier to Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec. His one easel-painting nude, of a slender Egyptian girl seen from behind, has the exquisite dignity, somewhat chalky, of an Ingres. A visitor to the Whitney should not omit to inspect the charcoal drawings. The Yeats portrait has been mentioned; there is also a stunning drawing of Nijinsky, some surprising studies of soldiers at the front in World War I, and a most beautifully drawn baby—Sargent, indeed, is so strong a draughtsman in black and white that one wonders why he seems never to have interested himself in etching.

The very listing of scattered highlights emphasizes, however, the something scattered, the something *ungathered*, about Sargent's use of his great gifts. "He can do anything, and don't know himself what he can do," his fellow artist Edwin Austin Abbey wrote of him as late as 1890. "He is latent with all manner of possibility." One trouble might have been that Sargent imbibed enough of the French avant-garde and the art-for-art's-sake philosophy of Wilde and Whistler to distrust portrait making as an exercise of high art. (Had he continued to evolve, of course, he might well, like Rembrandt, have lost his sitters.) His uneasiness denied his portraits the freshness of, say, Modigliani's, and his career the exuberance of Picasso's or Rubens's, to name two other timeless and fluent workers. This uneasiness—artistically sublimated into stabbing brushwork and edgy poses—may relate, of course, to his unsettled upbringing, the moving back and forth across Europe from one inexpensive rental to another.

HIS FATHER, Dr. Fitzwilliam Sargent, was an up-and-coming medical practitioner—the author and illustrator of the standard American work on bandaging—from a solid Philadelphia family. At the age of 34, in deference to his wife's nervous symptoms and grief at the death of their two-year-old daughter, he took a trip to Europe. The excursion never ended; Mary Singer Sargent's health continued uncertain enough to keep them perpetually abroad, though she was well enough to give birth to five more children, of whom the eldest was John. John Singer Sargent took pride in being an American, but he didn't see this country until he was 11, and only in the last decade of his life did he spend much time here.

Henry James's expatriation, like Whistler's, was purposeful and willed, whereas Sargent's had been wished upon him from birth. His nature was pliant and resourceful enough to make the best of it, and to carry his mother and surviving sisters into fame and prosperity with him. But when the visitor to the Whitney goes downstairs one flight and looks at the Hopper or two hanging in the permanent collection, he can feel what he has been missing: an undercurrent of emotion bred of the deep acquaintance that can take a landscape and its inhabitants to be a vocabulary, a set of wordless symbols effortlessly shared.

What did the English upper crust in its boots and furbelows mean to Sargent? What, even, did the straw-hatted boatmen and rosy-cheeked mignonettes dear to Impressionism mean to him? He came back, with his British accent and the massive embonpoint earned at a thousand dinner parties, to the United States, and to New England, because mural commissions abounded in Boston; but the two paintings of latest provenance at the Whitney exhibition testify that he also did plein-air paintings here. *The Artist Sketching* of 1922 shows his friend Dwight Blaney seated at an easel on a

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rock, in a pine woods; the tall, resolutely brown trees let through dabs of sunlight, and one of them has fallen, creating a tangle of dead branches and splintered trunk in the near foreground. It is recognizably an American forest, and looks better, and relates better to its solitary figure, than Sargent's color-streaked Impressionist groves. And some years earlier, the supercivilized painter undertook, gamely enough, a camping trip to the Rockies, and brought back a number of pictures, including this show's *Lake O'Hara*. It depicts a lake of a dead-green color that rings true in this remoteness, with stratified orange rocks above, relieved by shaggy pines and yielding, at the top of the canvas, to snow slopes whose summits we do not see. A litter of floating logs in the foreground is brushed in roughly, in neutral color. It is unrelieved North American wilderness, and makes a somber, simple, impressive landscape, innocent of human beings and of unease. Nature is impassive, and so is the art. The only thing American about Sargent was the wilderness in his eye.

Some chilling lessons for a nuclear age.

BOMBS AND MORALS

BY SOLLY ZUCKERMAN

REYKJAVIK HAS MADE the future even more uncertain than it seemed before. After the bombing of Tripoli earlier this year, many Americans canceled holiday trips to Europe lest they become the victims of terrorist reprisal. Many of the same Americans—or were they different ones?—had simultaneously been denigrating as "chicken" those Europeans who had been unwilling to associate themselves with an operation of which the majority of the American people is said to have approved.

Wings of Judgment: American Bombing in World War II
by Ronald Schaffer
(Oxford University Press, 272 pp., $18.95)

Despite the highly charged nature of this international incident, I doubt that more than a trivial fraction of Europeans interest themselves in debates about the morality of what is done in the name of the United States. Why, for example, is it right to strike at Libya because it harbors international terrorists, and at the same time right to condemn South Africa for bombing Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Botswana, where members of the African National Congress, which is openly committed to the overthrow of the South African government, find refuge, sustenance, and arms?

Europeans appreciate, of course, that powerful nations have always imposed their national will, whether through economic pressure or promises of help, or by blackmail and arm twisting, or by the threat or use of force. Indeed, their experience in this century has given Europeans more immediate and better reason to appreciate these things. They also know that a powerful state will always insist that its national will, whatever meaning is attached to the term, is animated in the conduct of international affairs by the highest ideals, by an acute sense of what is right and wrong. The cynic does sometimes wonder, however, why an act of international violence by one's own country can be said to be morally justified, while a corresponding act, carried out by another country with an equal sense of moral purpose, is condemned as criminal.

Morality is clearly an awkward bedfellow in the world of power politics. President Reagan insists that his SDI constitutes a higher order of morality than the acceptance of the simple and obvious fact that it is the fear of being annihilated by a nuclear onslaught that inhibits the Warsaw Pact and NATO powers from attacking each other directly. Now the speculations that have followed Reykjavik have generated a new fear in some European quarters, the fear that the Russians may be ready to agree to a zero-zero option that they summarily rejected only a few years ago. It is ironic that the Europe that was going to feel more secure if neither side deployed intermediate-range ballistic missiles now feels threatened lest this come to pass. Consistency and rationality are not attributes of the nuclear world.

The goal of SDI—to devise a space-based defense against nuclear ballistic missiles—undoubtedly threatens to impart to the nuclear arms race new and dangerous momentum, despite the fact that Gorbachev regards the president's dream as technically unattainable. I am not one of those who doubt the sincerity of the president's desire to bring about a non-nuclear world and to make his country immune to nuclear attack. He is certainly not alone in wanting these things; the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons has been proclaimed at least as forcefully by Gorbachev and by other national leaders. But while fear and suspicion divide the world, declarations of morality in international affairs almost inevitably become overshadowed by the realities.

No better illustration of this fact could be found than in Ronald Schaffer's *Wings of Judgment*, which tells how the Air Forces of the United States operated during the Second World War. His book is well written and well documented. I was interested to find that my name figures somewhat prominently in two of the three chapters that deal with the European air war. The reason is that at the time I was a strategic air planner on the staff of Air Chief Marshal Lord Tedder, deputy to General Eisenhower, then the supreme commander of the Allied forces. For a few months during 1943, in the Mediterranean theater, I was also attached to the staff of General Tooey Spaatz, who, after leaving the theater at the end of the year, became the com-

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mander in chief of all the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, with headquarters in England and on the continent. Through him, I got to know many of the military figures about whom Schaffer writes, and whom he describes so well.

THE STARTING point for Schaffer's inquiry is a passage he came across in the official history of the U.S. Air Forces. This stated that the idea of bombing the German homeland in order to break the morale of the German people was not only contrary to Air Forces policy and doctrine, but also abhorrent to American national ideals. When the United States was brought into the war, President Roosevelt announced that, provided they did not obviously clash with "the ideals of the people of the United States," the sternest measures could be used to assure the total victory needed to satisfy "the champions of tolerance, and decency, and faith." Henry L. Stimson, whom I seem to remember was taken aback when he discovered that it was the practice to intercept enemy messages (he was apparently unaware that in war gentlemen do read each other's letters), was of the same mind. The conflict between the Allied and the Axis powers was "a moral conflict." General George C. Marshall, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and of the Combined Chiefs Committee, a body that included both the American and British chiefs of staff, believed that armies had to concentrate on vital objectives, whatever the cost in *military* lives.

The generals of the Air Forces—Hap Arnold, Tooey Spaatz, Jimmy Doolittle, Ira Eaker, Haywood Hansell, Curtis LeMay, and Larry Norstad—shared a "common humanity" that "conditioned the way they reacted to moral issues" that arose during the course of their work. In the interwar years, they had all attended the Air Corps Tactical School, where, until the mid-'30s, the doctrine that was fostered was the one usually associated with the names of the Italian general Giulio Douhet and Lord Trenchard, the man who commanded the British Air Forces in World War I. In the United States essentially the same doctrine was espoused, somewhat inconsistently, by General "Billy" Mitchell in his campaign to gain the independence of the American Air Forces from the Army, a campaign that ended in his court-martial and resignation from the service.

The essence of the doctrine is that, given air supremacy, wars can be won over the heads of battling armies by bombing the enemy's homeland, his centers of production, his cities, and his ports, communication centers, and arsenals. "How," asked Douhet, "could a country go on living and working oppressed by the nightmare of imminent destruction and death?" This is one of several of Douhet's colorful passages quoted by Schaffer. Another asserts that the thrust of the doctrine is "toward total destruction of urban centers resulting in a complete breakdown of civilian morale and enemy will to fight." But while the U.S. Army Air Corps was ready to accept the "mass bombing strategy" of Douhet, this did not mean, as General Hansell put it, "the indiscriminate bombing of women and children." It is the fact that this sometimes happened that worries Schaffer.

FOR WHATEVER the doctrines may have been, whatever the ideals, whatever the hopes, they were very different from the realities the American Air Forces faced when they started their buildup in Europe during the spring of 1942. By the time the USAAF arrived in England, both the RAF and the Luftwaffe had been bloodied, first in the Battle of Britain and then in the bombing of British and German cities. The Battle of Britain was an epic of air-to-air combat that, fortunately for the outcome of the war, was won by the RAF. The indiscriminate bombing of cities came about because both the Luftwaffe and the RAF quickly learned that bombing on training ranges is very different from bombing in real life. Navigational and bombing accuracy were nothing like what they had been cracked up to be by prewar proponents of air power. "The bomber will always get through" had been the cry in the British Parliament. It didn't, and trying to make it proved to be a very costly exercise for the air forces.

The air chiefs and the public (including the politicians) also had grossly exaggerated ideas of what a conventional bomb would do. There were fears that a single one could wreak almost as much death and destruction as the world later learned to associate with an atom bomb. It didn't. Consequently, as Schaffer observes, the British and German bomber forces resorted to what became regarded as indiscriminate night raids. And he is also correct when he writes that when they arrived in England, the American air commanders believed that "they could succeed where the RAF had failed—in precision daytime bombing," and that consequently they refused to pursue the course that both their common enemy and their ally had been forced to adopt.

SCHAFFER'S fascinating story of those distant days is based on official and other histories of the period, and also on the personal accounts recorded after the war by a few of the main actors. As one who was involved, I do think that the sources he studied underemphasize a very critical point. The American chiefs were determined not to be overshadowed by their opposite numbers in the RAF, regardless of the latter's far richer experience. Tooey Spaatz is quoted as telling an interviewer after the war that he "didn't go along with urban area bombing." The truth is that he and his colleagues fully appreciated the operational considerations that had led the RAF to area bombing at night. Still, they wanted to prove that in daylight bombs could be "dropped into a barrel" from great heights, that precision bombing was possible. And they also wanted to learn for themselves.

Although he does not give the date, Schaffer notes that Spaatz once confided to me his worry that Air Chief Marshal Harris, the commander in chief of the RAF Bomber Command, might go on to win the war by himself, pursuing a policy of area bombing Germany "under cover of darkness." Whatever the cost, therefore, even if it turned out that attacks on so-called "strategic targets" ended in indiscriminate bombing, the USAAF had to maintain its own chain of command and its own policies; the campaign it was waging had to be as independent as possible. In those days the air force was still called the United States Army Air Forces. But the RAF had already become an independent service, as had the Luftwaffe and the French and Italian air forces. The more successfully the American Air Forces performed during the war, and the more independently, the sooner they would be able to shed that irritating and unnecessary "A" in USAAF. That, I would suggest, was more important to many of the American air generals than wrestling with their souls about the morality of their actions. The written record on which Schaffer necessarily has had to base his book cannot, alas, convey a sense of this aspect of the highly charged and constantly changing scene, any more than it can

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tell the full story or reveal the different ways that the players saw it unroll.

THE COST OF persisting in the policy of daylight bombing in the face of ever strengthening German defenses during 1942 and 1943 proved disastrous, and impossible to sustain before long-range fighters became available to accompany the B-17 and B-24 bombers on their raids into Germany. The breaking point came on August 17, 1943, when one group of 146 B-17 bombers set out to attack aircraft plants at Regensburg, and another, a group of 230, the ball-bearing factories at Schweinfurt. Out of this total force of 376 heavy bombers, 120 were shot down (84 of the first group, 36 of the second), with a loss of 550 crewmen killed or captured. Many of the B-17s that did not become casualties flew on to whatever airfields they could find in Sicily and North Africa, where a small force was then marshaled for an attack on shipping near Bordeaux, before returning to their bases in England.

Ira Eaker, the commander in chief of the 8th Air Force, had flown out from England to stay with Tooey Spaatz at his villa in La Marsa in Tunisia, where he was due to meet Curtis LeMay, the commander of the B-17 force, who had flown out separately. As I was due to return to England at the time, Eaker gave me a lift to Marrakesh in one of the straggler B-17s. On the way we stopped at an abandoned RAF airfield for a short briefing meeting with LeMay. I was deeply impressed both by his determination and by his concern about the fearful losses that his command had suffered. In Marrakesh I transferred, as the only passenger, to another B-17 straggler, and this time was struck by the enormous and innocent courage of its crew, few of whom could have seen more than a few months' squadron service. No one was asking whether what they were doing was morally justified. It was war. I wonder how many of that particular crew lived to enjoy the fruits of victory.

In the face of heavy losses, and with the precision bombing of specific targets still to be realized, it was inevitable that the American Air Forces commanders had to turn to striking at the enemy in any way they could. The RAF and the Luftwaffe had been through it all before, and had had to adapt their tactics to the realities, which meant attacking targets that were large enough to be hit, with as few losses as possible. If this meant indiscriminate area bombing, so it had to be. The thousand-bomber raid by the RAF on Cologne on the night of May 30, 1942, was a brilliantly executed reprisal attack, whose purpose was to demonstrate, through the destruction it wreaked, the power of the RAF. When London was bombed, the public reaction was always: bomb Berlin.

The chiefs of the U.S. Air Forces could not just have stood aside, allowing their forces to be decimated as they went on trying to do what was all but operationally impossible by day. So it was that as their bombing proficiency improved under battle conditions, they too engaged from time to time in what turned out to be indiscriminate attacks. What they were doing in daylight to improve the precision of their operations merely mirrored what the RAF was doing at night. The assault on German cities under cover of darkness was also associated with continuous improvements in tactics to reduce losses, and with improvements in navigational and bombing accuracy. It is a moot point whether by the end of the European war the daylight bombers of the American forces were any more accurate than the night bombers of the RAF.

SCHAFFER may be asking too much, then, when he implies that the American commanders of the period should have been as concerned about the moral and ethical issues of bombing as he became when he studied the record. There were some, a few of whom he names, who were indeed ethically exercised, in particular General George McDonald, the Strategic Air Forces' director of intelligence, a kindly man whom I remember well. He is reported as having castigated the policies into which the American Air Forces in Europe were being impelled as "indiscriminate homicide and destruction." Some USAAF and RAF commanders may also have pondered retrospectively about the morality of the death and destruction that they caused, but I doubt if there were many. Indeed, no more than a handful of prominent British citizens pontificated about the immorality of reprisal attacks on German cities. They wanted Britain to turn the other cheek. They, too, were not heeded. The moralists were certainly in the minority in those days.

For myself, I cannot recall anyone in the civil defense world in which I moved during the first two years of the war, or in the military circles with which I was associated for the remaining three,

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who worried about the morality of bombing. During the period when Britain was being bombed, the national casualty survey I directed had discovered from detailed analyses of actual incidents that per ton of aircraft load, smaller rather than larger bombs had caused more casualties in the raids on London. I certainly did not feel that it was morally wrong when this finding was subsequently used for offensive purposes. Nor, when I moved to the Mediterranean theater, did I find that moral principles about the possible killing of civilians were a consideration that consciously affected the choice of targets in the implementation of some particular bombing plan.

Shortly before I became a member of Spaatz's small mess in the Algerian town of Constantine, there had been an almost insignificant attack on Marsala, a town on the west coast of Sicily. Larry Norstad, who had just been given his first star as a general, and who in 1958 was to become NATO's supreme commander, was the youngest of Spaatz's entourage. He was the operations officer who had had to convey the order for the attack. That was the only time I can remember regrets being expressed because bombing was associated with civilian casualties. An older and more cynical one-star general sometimes made fun of Larry by calling him "Larry the killer." I never did learn why Marsala had been chosen as a target, but Larry did not like being teased that way one little bit.

SCHAFFER tells of the United States's "sensitiv[ity] to charges of barbarism," and of the setting up in August 1943 of an American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in Europe. I met the first representatives of the organization soon after they were sent to Sicily. They came to see me because they had failed to convince anyone "in real authority" of the importance of their mission, and hoped that I would speak to Tedder, which I duly did. How much good came of that I do not know. People at the top did not pilot the B-17s and B-24s. The church of Casa Professa, one of the beautiful Renaissance churches of Palermo, had been badly damaged by bombs. (I believe it has since been restored to its former glory.) I still have an illustration that I picked up soon after General Patton captured the town, with the inscription "Built 1563, Bombed 9th May 1943." The church had been hit in an RAF raid, but as so frequently happened, it was the American Air Forces that were blamed.

A handbook was issued to the Air Forces that designated one category of Italian towns that was not to be bombed without express "authority from above." There were certainly some senior officers who became personally concerned about operations that resulted in the destruction of historic monuments, but they were incapable of seeing to it that this never happened. Those "above" did not prevent the sixth-century Monte Cassino Abbey from being flattened by bombing without any reciprocal military advantage, or American bombers from bombing Pisa, or, "for no apparent military reason," as Schaffer puts it, from bombing the ruins of Pompeii. Higher authority in war can easily declare its ideals; the men at the "sharp end," the pilots and the bombardiers, are the ones who risk their lives.

I AM BROUGHT into Schaffer's story in his account of the pre-D-day disputes over the strategy that the British and the American air forces should pursue for the dual purpose of bringing Germany to its knees and helping the armies that were due to land in Normandy on the start of their drive eastward. The plan I proposed, which had been endorsed by both Tedder and Eisenhower, was formally put forward in the first week of January 1944. It was based on an empirical analysis of what had actually happened in Sicily and southern Italy. Its purpose was to dislocate and destroy the rail network of northwestern Europe, starting in France and the Low Countries and moving on into the Ruhr and the rest of Germany. There was nothing theoretical or abstract about what was proposed; it was founded on experience.

For the plan to succeed, however, both the British and the American bomber forces would have had to divert part of their effort to its implementation. Harris immediately and explicitly stated his opposition to the plan, as he also did to the whole idea of Operation Overlord. As he put it, diverting the Bomber Command's effort "from the military function for which it has been equipped and trained" to attacking targets such as munition dumps and the communications network "might give a specious appearance of 'supporting' the army," but "in reality it would be the gravest disservice we could do them. It would lead directly to disaster." What Harris wanted was to win the war on his own by continuing the destruction of German cities.

Spaatz was also opposed, but at first his representatives at the meetings at which operational shape was being given to the new transportation bombing policy were unreservedly in its favor. It was not until four weeks after these meetings had started that Spaatz came up with the alternative plan of attacking Germany's synthetic-oil plants. Harris enjoyed the powerful support of Churchill, which Spaatz suspected would help to prevent the RAF Bomber Command from coming under Eisenhower's command, a fate which Spaatz feared. If he was not prepared to associate himself with Harris's area-bombing policy, he could at least fight for an independent policy that called for precision bombing and that, if successfully implemented, would deliver a critical blow to the enemy. Harris believed that he could win the European war through the area bombing of cities. Spaatz would show that he could become the victor by depriving Hitler of his supplies of oil.

From that moment every possible argument was deployed to defeat the transportation plan. The controversy dragged on for nearly three months, but in the end President Roosevelt settled it by overriding Churchill and siding with Eisenhower. The most significant criticism was that however precisely and carefully railway centers were bombed, there were bound to be French and Belgian civilian casualties. Eisenhower's headquarters had realized this from the start, but the estimates of French casualties that were put forward by those who wanted to kill the plan had been incorrectly calculated, perhaps deliberately, and were grossly exaggerated, although not, as was obvious to Tedder, because of humanitarian considerations.

COLONEL Richard Hughes, the chief intelligence officer of the U.S. Strategic Air Forces, was one of Spaatz's representatives at the planning meetings. Of British birth, he was a professional soldier who, after resigning his British commission, had moved to the United States in 1930, where he later joined the U.S. Army Air Corps as an intelligence officer. Hughes is described by Schaffer as a stern moralist, a man who hated the fact that innocent civilians might be killed as a result of military operations. I do not remember him revealing any such feelings about possible French casualties in the first weeks in which the transportation plan was discussed, a plan to

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which he had then given his support. On the other hand, once Spaatz had proposed an independent plan for the American bombers, he became assiduous in pressing the moral argument. Spaatz, of course, had a special worry. His forces operated by day and, unlike Harris's, could therefore be seen. They often got blamed for inadvertent damage and casualties caused by the RAF.

Yet however often the moral card was played, it was not, as Schaffer's account makes plain, a critical matter to Spaatz. He and his staff needed the oil plants as a separate target system at which to strike. They were not ready to accept Tedder's description of the communications network as "the common denominator" that was essential for moving not only troops, but also raw materials, components, and finished products to and from factories, and coal and oil to and from the synthetic-oil plants. So far as Harris was concerned, oil, like ball bearings, was just another one of those "panacea" target systems, as he called them, that could never be sufficiently damaged by bombing to cripple the German war effort decisively. Here events were to prove him right, at the same time as they failed to bear out his faith in area bombing.

Despite all the objections, all the arguments, the upshot was that the transportation plan was adopted. And it succeeded in its purpose, although certainly at a cost of French and Belgian lives. The toll, however, was nothing like what had been suggested: 160,000 killed and wounded. The actual figure was about 10,000, of whom most were non-fatal casualties. The transportation network was, as should have been obvious from the start, indeed the common denominator.

SCHAFFER tells us that in June 1945 some of the senior members of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey (among them George Ball and Paul Nitze), an organization that was then investigating the results of air operations in Europe, were called to Washington to advise the Joint Targets Group, which was trying to decide which were the best targets to bomb in Japan. Their recommendation was that first priority should be accorded to land and water transportation. The advice was ignored. This time the Washington planners and the air generals preferred not precision bombing of specific targets, but the destruction of Japanese cities by area bombing. Black had become white.

In Europe the German air defenses had been severely disrupted by early 1945, and despite all the moralizing, the attacks made by the American Air Forces against German targets also became increasingly indiscriminate. On February 22, 1945, an operation called Clarion was mounted, in which thousands of American heavy bombers, fighter bombers, and fighters roamed over Germany, bombing and shooting up anything and everything they could. It had been obvious that as the Allied armies moved in from the west and the Russians from the east, the area within which the air planners could find "worthwhile" German targets would steadily decrease. In the final months of the war, cities in eastern Germany thus became targets, the climax being the destruction of Dresden, which Schaffer calls "one of the moral causes célèbres of World War II."

IT WAS that disaster that stimulated Churchill to issue a minute in which he condemned the destruction of cities "simply for the sake of increasing the terror, though under other pretexts"—words that he later changed to assuage the justifiably bruised feelings of the "bomber barons," who had enjoyed his unstinted support up to that moment. An unfortunate postscript that Harris added to his comment on Churchill's original minute, and about which the official history is silent, stated that "the feeling . . . over Dresden could be easily explained by any psychiatrist. It is connected with German bands and Dresden shepherdesses."

Churchill's protestation, and the reactions it stimulated, to which Schaffer does not refer, came too late in the day to influence the course of the war—particularly the bombing of Japan, to which Schaffer devotes three chapters, the third of which is entitled "The Bombing of Japan: American Perceptions of the Moral Issue." The fact is that by the time the air assault on Japan began in earnest, any scruples that the air force commanders might have had about area bombing had vanished completely. So, too, had negative attitudes toward night operations—as opposed to presumed precision bombing by day. The upshot was that the most dramatic nighttime area attacks of World War II were not made by the RAF in Europe or by the Luftwaffe against British cities, but were those carried out by the USAAF in Japan, particularly after General LeMay had

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taken over the 21st Bomber Command.

Precise estimates, almost to the nearest ton, were made by the planners of the weight of the firebombs that were needed to burn to the ground the cities of Japan. On the night of March 9, 1945, 16 square miles of Tokyo were utterly destroyed, with 90,000 people killed, 70,000 of whose bodies remained unidentified and unclaimed. Small fragmentation bombs were dropped after the firebombs poured down—as they had been in England and Germany—in order to discourage the firefighter and ambulance services. Some of the unidentified corpses "had turned into ashes that scattered like sand in a light wind."

All this happened in the pursuit of conventional war. On August 6, 1945, Hiroshima, and on August 9, Nagasaki, were destroyed by atom bombs. From that moment, the moral issue in war, such as it ever was, was inevitably transformed.

DESPITE SAYING that he would keep his own views in the background, Schaffer reveals all too clearly how much he deplores the fact that moral and ethical considerations played so small a part in the operational deliberations of the air generals of the Second World War. His expectations, alas, are too high. After the bombing of Dresden, General Arnold wrote that "war must be destructive, and to a certain extent inhuman and ruthless." Earlier Arnold had declared that the bomber could be "the most humane of weapons." Three days after the landings in Normandy, General Spaatz agreed to a plan to destroy "undefended" and "virgin" towns in Germany. Only a few weeks before, he had used the moral argument to bolster his opposition to the transportation plan.

So far as moral considerations were concerned, there was nothing to worry about. The system of command absolved the air force chiefs from any moral responsibility for the consequences of their operations. The military man, said Spaatz, carries out the orders of his political bosses. And the latter certainly understood that "the face of war," as Stimson put it, "is the face of death." Congress and the American people were free to moralize about the hideous sufferings that war brings to the innocent. The job of the political leadership was to give the orders, not to moralize. What Schaffer does not tell us is that their orders were usually little more than a statement of the objectives that had to be achieved, and of the means that would be provided to this end. From then on it was the business of the military.

CLEMENCEAU, the great French political leader of the First World War, is often credited with the aphorism that war is too serious a matter to be left to the generals. Schaffer has discovered that Clemenceau's dictum did not apply to the air battles of the Second World War. He cites one of General LeMay's senior intelligence officers in the Pacific as writing that "war was exclusively the province of the military," and that "the methods it used to secure the national interest were no business of either the critics or the public in general." What the officer omitted from this forthright observation was the fact that the generals frequently found themselves committed by the views of their subordinates.

Neither Spaatz nor Harris was responsible for putting the name Dresden on the list of targets. That was done by a Joint Strategic Targets Committee, presided over by a senior RAF and a senior USAAF officer. Depending on operational considerations, the commanders could then decide which of several possible targets on the list that the committee had drawn up was to become the "target for tonight." If condemnation for brutality and inhumanity is called for, it should therefore not be directed only at the top, at the generals. The whole system would need to be arraigned, perhaps most of all the intelligence officers and the planners—and, of course, the weaponeers who labored in laboratories and in the workshops of industry.

Schaffer, incidentally, is also somewhat severe on the air generals for carrying over into the postwar years the lessons they thought they had learned during the Second World War. Until I read his book, I was unaware that General Eaker had advised that North Vietnamese cities should be given "the Berlin treatment." I am not surprised that he did. Nor am I surprised that General LeMay, as well as some postwar civilian strategists, assumes that nuclear warheads can be regarded in the calculations they make simply as units of vast destructive power. After all, it was only the last war that they had fought or read about, not some future and imagined nuclear war.

Here, however, Schaffer himself has missed a point. Massive retaliation, or MAD, is not, as the words he uses could be taken to imply, World War II "area bombing vastly multiplied," nor is so-called counterforce strategy the nuclear equivalent of presumed precision bombing.

To oversimplify: the destruction of Berlin or Tokyo can be regarded as the violent rearrangement, as a consequence of fire and the force of shock waves, of the material components out of which the cities had been built. The shift from conventional to nuclear would mean the multiplication of these destructive forces a thousand times—ten thousand times—with the addition of the energetic forces that had bound together the subatomic particles that made up the matter constituting the warhead, and that, having been released, would for all practical purposes lethally contaminate with radioactivity everything around. Had Berlin been destroyed by ground-burst nuclear missiles of the kind that exist today, as opposed to conventional bombs, it would not have been rebuilt. It could not have been rebuilt for years, even if there had been people around to do the job. Nor would Tokyo have been rebuilt, nor the city of London, nor the Abbey of Monte Cassino, nor Coventry Cathedral. Think of Chernobyl, a continuing disaster that would fade into insignificance in comparison with the consequences of the explosion of a single megaton bomb. True, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were rebuilt, but they were destroyed by bombs that exploded in the air and that resulted in only a fraction of the radioactive contamination that would have occurred had they burst at ground level—and still it took years to rebuild the two cities, with all the help of the resources that were being generated by a resurgent economy.

No previous war provides a parallel for the nuclear strategies that today are called "massive retaliation" and "counterforce." Nor, were these words ever to become more than the catchwords that they are, would the reality ever be paralleled. Nuclear war implies not an argument about morals and ethics; it implies only madness. The price of a demonstration of national will with the help of nuclear weapons against an opponent similarly armed would be national suicide—whatever practical results relevant to a defensive system might conceivably emerge over the next decade or two in the pursuit of the Strategic Defense Initiative. □

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GAYS OF OUR LIVES

The Lost Language of Cranes by David Leavitt

(Knopf, 319 pp., $17.95)

David Leavitt made his mark two years ago with *Family Dancing*, a collection of stories. In those stories he staked his claim to be the voice of a generation, a generation that was rejecting the rebelliousness and the iconoclasm it had inherited from the '60s and was aligning itself precisely with traditional goals, now seen as full of reward and challenge. The most characteristic of Leavitt's stories dramatized the growing pains of homosexuals and those who raised them; he seemed to combine the experience of an urban gay man with the priorities of a liberal parent. The results represented (depending on your point of view) either the triumphant absorption of seemingly intractable subject matter into the mainstream from which it had too long been excluded, or the denaturing of difficult material to fit the small tensions and releases of the magazine story—a success that should count as a failure, or at least as a capitulation.

The Lost Language of Cranes returns to this theme on a greatly enlarged scale. Owen and Rose Benjamin are a fiftyish Manhattan couple, he the director of admissions at a private boys' school, she a copy editor. Their son Philip is 25 and an editor (sometimes a rewriter) of romance fiction. When the novel opens, Philip's gayness is a secret he has yet to share with his parents, and he is newly involved with a young man called Eliot. His happiness is threatened only by his fear of it.

The twist is that Philip's father is also homosexual, though he has restricted himself in the past to regular Sunday visits to a porno theater and to anonymous sexual acts on the premises. The opening sections of the book revolve around the threat that the Benjamins' apartment building will go co-op. Rose and Owen have been insulated from reality by rent stabilization and their own unwillingness to confront things, and the message is clear: these people must renegotiate the terms on which they live.

The soapiness of the situation is occasionally confronted in the text. Rose, when she intuits Owen's secret after Philip has revealed his, sees its luridness as an additional humiliation:

> Either, separately, had been the subject of books, television movies, talk shows; both together was the stuff of tabloids, with headlines blaring above ugly lime-green and red photographs of movie stars: N.Y. WOMAN DISCOVERS HUSBAND AND SON SHARE SICK SEXUAL SECRET.

The trouble, though, is not the luridness of the donnée, nor even its improbability, but the way it poses problems of belief for the reader while rather too obviously solving problems for the writer. How else can Leavitt be true to his experience as a gay man without being relegated to a merely sectarian readership, except by inventing a nuclear family in which homosexuality is the majority orientation?

That's not, of course, the last problem that Leavitt must face. He chooses to model his principal characters as fully as possible, describing them from the inside as well as the outside, and modulating freely from Philip to Owen to Rose. Most of the time he has the literary means, the confidence, and the concentration to bring it off, but such an approach does carry with it certain assumptions. It claims to accommodate all points of view, to leave nothing beyond its synthesizing sweep. And yet, parts of the novel make different claims, though oddly enough they are parts that would not be hard to remove: the title and occasional paragraphs, plus one short section.

Jerene, Eliot's lesbian roommate, a secondary character, is writing a dissertation whose exact title is constantly changing but that always addresses issues of developmental psychology. She is fascinated by "lost languages"—not languages such as Manx or Cornish that have competed with a dominant tongue and been driven to extinction, but private languages that have never had more than a tremulous hermetic half-life. She writes a chapter on a famous pair of twins who invented their own language, and discusses it with Eliot and Philip:

> The social workers won out, for the good of the children. I suppose it was the right thing. . . . I wonder if they remember the secret language, if they still speak it in private, or dream in it. Probably not. Probably their early childhood is like a dream to them, the way it's supposed to be for children who are kidnapped and raised by different parents. Something they're not even sure happened. . . . I would love to compare the twins' language with some others . . . with Basque, perhaps, or the dialects of Hunza, to see if people invent languages the same way, if in a different kind of world the twins' language could have flourished, could have become the language of a culture. But I've realized that's something I can never do. What's relevant really is that the only possible choice, in the case of these twins, was the choice that was made. The language had to die. It's the integration of those little girls which is pertinent—that, and what was lost with it.

The last five words reverse the direction of the whole passage, and pretend to reopen an issue that, except for the purposes of pathos, the book in fact regards as closed: the cost of assimilation into society.

The lost languages theme is loudly, even portentously sounded, but it is not actually integrated with the narrative in any way. Jerene discovers in a library the case history of a boy who grew up isolated and neglected next to a building site, and believed himself to be a crane, imitating the movements of the cranes he saw; but the discovery is given a section of its own ("The Crane-Child"). The section has a pretentiously maudlin air about it:

> The question Jerene kept coming up against, reading the article, was this: What did it sound like? What did it feel like? The language belonged to Michel alone; it was forever lost to her. How wondrous, how grand those cranes must have seemed to Michel, compared to the small and clumsy creatures who surrounded him. For each, in his own way, she believed, finds what it is he must love, and loves it; the window becomes a mirror; whatever it is that we love, that is who we are.

This epiphany (expressed with male pronouns that are just a little surprising from a lesbian feminist) is discrete, and doesn't extend to the rest of the book. And yet this indirect, metaphorical level is the only one on which Leavitt treats the existential options open to gay people. Obviously the passages about lost languages are meant to have a wider resonance, but they can hardly fail to suggest an application to the male homosexuals who constitute two of the book's three principals, particularly in the absence of more direct discussion. What

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are the costs of absorption into the mainstream?

The answer seems to be, none. Subcultural institutions cater in the book only to the flesh. Bars are full of men whose eyes are "large and bright as those of nocturnal animals," men who throw each other "needful glances," just as Central Park contains men in a "lonely circle," each engaged in "the sad ritual of his kind" (that is, Philip's kind, though he has stumbled on them by accident and doesn't join in). Philip's friends are all "on the prowl, in the market, on the lookout," and have "the thin, questing look of people desperate to find lovers." Lovers, once found, would somehow rescue them from their kind, would save them from a friendship group that might better be described as a defensive huddle of solitaries. Lovers would bring about an absolute cancellation of need. The only substantial character in the book who gives time to the subculture other than to find a partner is Jerene, who is a switchboard volunteer; and this hobby of hers seems contrived mainly for the pathos of the moment when Owen phones in for counseling. Jerene tries to help him, but he hangs up.

The only other character who has a viewpoint broader than the personal is a disillusioned radical traumatized into celibacy by the health crisis. He and Philip meet at a dinner party, and he is allowed to make a few criticisms of Philip's generation, but the fact that he combines a defiant past with a craven present (he admits self-torturingly to refusing to share a friend's water glass) makes him seem by definition a creature of reaction and extremes. This seems a gratuitous dismissal of some interesting social history, to say the least.

It is an uncomfortable truth that, by imposing an artificial consensus, the epidemic has actually made Leavitt's rhetorical task an easier one. Any freewheeling sexual identity is now thoroughly discredited, and an aspiration to monogamy has begun to look like an achievement against odds rather than a laying down of the splendid burden of improvisation. Leavitt's particular priorities have a self-evidence that they would hardly have had a decade ago, so that he seems, perhaps, less distinctive than he actually is.

But though homosexuality in the novel offers no possibilities for independent existence, it is curiously privileged in the text. Owen's and Philip's sexual miseries and consolations are spelled out with a raw authority, while Rose's adulteries are anodyne. *They* get paragraphs, *she* gets sentences: "Karl was a skillful lover and had brought her to pleasures she had never approached with Owen." Even from a five-year-long affair with a colleague she is allowed to retain no memory more electric than of her lover's putting his tie on before his pants. Poor Rose! She's only there to make the reader think, "Poor Rose!" Her eventual complaint against Owen is that she was never first in his life, but she is entitled to a similar grudge against her author. For him she is generic mother, generic wife, a pure resonator of pain and puzzlement.

If Rose is an agent of pathos, Owen is an agent of irony, some of it crude. Owen has always shied away from expressing physical affection for Philip, terrified that homosexuality will somehow rub off on his son. When he falteringly tells Philip of his attraction to men, Philip inadvertently shuts him up, saying quickly, "Which is fine. . . . I know gay men who feel occasional attractions to women, too. The point is . . . ." Philip dismisses avowals of bisexuality (with, as it happens, total accuracy in this instance) as ways of keeping options unfairly open, so as to deny homosexuality if the going gets rough.

Irony dogs Owen even to the bars. A man he meets there regales him with a story about some "kids" who had come into the bar recently, one of whom shouted, "Dad! What are you doing here?" "You should've seen those guys drop their glasses," says the man, with a laugh. "Funny, I guess," says Owen. This is irony as it occurs in soap operas—a face in suppressed torment, unable to speak its pain, flinching as casual comments happen on the truth, while the camera gloats.

LEAVITT IS UNWISE enough at one point to use a soap opera on television as counterpoint to a scene of his own. Jerene, disowned by her parents, finally tracks her grandmother down in an old folks' home and visits her there. It turns out that Jerene's parents had told the old woman that Jerene had gone to Africa with the Peace Corps, and had married and had children there. Jerene plays along with these fictions, fighting back tears, while her grandmother's eyes stray to the TV screen and what she calls "my program." To be sure, the soap opera of Leavitt's scene is likely to be far superior to the old woman's program, but the contrast is not as polar as the author seems to assume.

Leavitt is astonishingly good at what a jazz pianist would call "vamping," that is, at filling in with chords while he waits for a melody to come along. He can improvise whole tracts of detail and plausible psychology for his characters, major and minor; but he also tends to

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spoil some of his best moments with relapses into banality. Any number of passages are only inches from cliché, though that may be an acceptable distance for many of his readers. Leavitt is adroit enough at the business of literary construction to provide satisfyingly anticlimactic set pieces, and he knows quite enough about his subject to be able to earn a reader's emotion—if he could only learn to leave the heartstrings alone. A reader is an Aeolian harp, after all, sounded by the whole accumulated breath of a book. Touch the strings and you stifle the music.

When Philip has recovered from Eliot's desertion—when the "ring of ice" round his heart finally cracks—he starts to keep company with Brad. (His friend Sally, who fixed him up with Eliot, also recommends Brad. In this novel, straight women are either gay men's mothers or their matchmakers.) Brad thinks he is looking for the perfect lover, and has a succession of unsuccessful flings with actors, but he and Philip drift into an intimacy they only afterward define as romantic. Brad lives in an apartment to which his parents have "delivered intact the furniture of his childhood bedroom in New Jersey. There was a pair of big lacquered bunk beds, a white activity table, three bean-bag chairs." The narrative voice defends the decor against charges of frippery, as if the oddity of the arrangement was effeminacy rather than infantilism: "Brad took a jersey from a white child's dresser which, like all the furniture in the apartment, was made for a boy, completely stripped of ornament, of anything that might be even mildly construed as frilly or feminine." It's as if Leavitt were making the point that Brad's diapers are blue rather than pink.

In due course Philip stays over, in the bottom bunk, and notices Brad's hand dangling above him in the dim light. He squeezes it. It squeezes back. They stay like that for a few minutes, until Brad points out that this isn't a suitable posture for sleeping. They let go of each other's hands, curl up, and fall asleep.

This hushed conspiracy of compromise doesn't seem very much like a grown-up relationship. The reader has been prepared for this by learning that Philip

> could imagine no more pleasurable life than the kind led within the cozy confines of a half-hour situation comedy. . . . He really wanted each day in his life to collapse into a neat dot of light, to end the way an episode of "The Brady Bunch" ended, with everything in its place, all the gentle, soft conflicts put away or stuffed under the bunk beds, or smoothed like frosting on a birthday cake.

Even so, shadowy Brad is a disappointment.

Owen's conflicts are not so easily tidied away. He leaves Rose, at least for one night, and calls Philip for help and somewhere to sleep. Philip has been staying with Brad, and as he leaves to meet his father their relationship reaches another little milestone:

> Spontaneously, without thought, they kissed for the first time, long and lovingly, then stood there in the doorway, embracing, their eyes shut tightly. "I don't want to leave," Philip said. "I feel safe here. I really want more than anything else to stay here with you, Brad."
>
> "I'll be here," Brad said.

This is an appropriately dewy moment, in a romance that is still unconsummated at the novel's end. Its attraction seems to be its emancipation from the adult body; everything is rendered as innocently tentative.

It appears, from what Owen says later that night, that Philip has been a role model for his father: "Everything you said terrified me," he says, "but it also inspired me, I guess, gave me incentive. That night, I realized I couldn't go back to the way things were." But gratitude is not the only imaginable emotion that a gay man of Owen's generation might feel for one of Philip's, even if they weren't related by blood. Resentment would be a strong candidate—the feeling (more intense before the health crisis) that younger people are being unfairly rewarded for the same expressiveness that was so heavily penalized a short time earlier. The progress of liberal ideas is a bittersweet experience for those who have grown up under a different dispensation.

But Leavitt is least concerned at this stage of his book to represent an older generation's emotions with accuracy. He is pushing through a complex Oedipal agenda on behalf of his character, whereby Philip can be a father to his father while having what is to all intents and purposes a prepubescent romance with Brad in a room full of children's furniture (as if his parents were sleeping in the next room). Even Rose, after a period of coldness, embraces Philip at the end of their last meeting in the novel, treating him again as the loved child.

It is not a fair charge against *The Lost*

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Language of Cranes that it fails to provide a psychologically mature hero. It is under no obligation to do so. But there is something dispiriting about the mixture in the book of great ambition and great willingness to compromise, a sort of precocious regression. (With a little work this might become a definition of yuppiedom.) David Leavitt's prose is sometimes beautifully tailored, but the emotions he aims for at this stage of his career are still strictly off-the-rack.

ADAM MARS-JONES

Adam Mars-Jones is the editor of *Mae West Is Dead: Recent Lesbian and Gay Fiction* (Faber and Faber).

A MAN, A WOMAN, AND A BLACKBIRD

Wallace Stevens: A Biography The Early Years, 1879-1923 by Joan Richardson

(William Morrow, 591 pp., $21.95)

The first volume of Joan Richardson's life of Wallace Stevens tells the story from his birth in Reading, Pennsylvania, on October 2, 1879, to the publication of his first book of poetry, *Harmonium*, in 1923. *Harmonium* makes a natural break, since Stevens wrote virtually nothing for the next six years. This biography tells as much as can be told of an early life nearly bereft of incident. If Stevens's life was dramatic, its theater was his mind. There is nothing here to appease a passion for gossip. After his death in 1955, his widow destroyed or erased a lot of his early correspondence and some of the journal entries he made, but it would be wild to imagine that anything disgraceful was suppressed.

By that time she was such a desiccated creature that she could not let him speak for himself, even to posterity. Stevens made few mistakes, in poetry or in life, but he started with an appalling blunder: he pursued Elsie Moll, courted her for five assiduous years, and married her on September 21, 1909. The marriage was, in the event, an unimpassioned thing. There is now no telling what went wrong, except that according to the wisdom of hindsight they should never have married. Elsie had no interest in his poems. Even when he was recognized as a poet, at least by a few qualified intimates, she retained her indifference. In November 1915, Stevens read some of his finest poems, including "Sunday Morning," "Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock," and "Peter Quince at the Clavier," to a group of friends at Walter and Louise Arensberg's salon in New York. As the company assembled, he introduced his reading by remarking that his wife disliked the poems: "I like Mr. Stevens's things," she said, "when they are not affected, but he writes so much that is affected." Besides, she regarded as her sole property the poems he had written to her in courtship, and resented his publishing them.

Even when Stevens became a successful executive officer in the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company, and gave her a lavish home and garden, she declined to share his interests. She did not receive company, least of all the company of fellow poets. "Mrs. Stevens and I went out for a walk yesterday afternoon," he told Charles O'Dowd; "we walked to the end of Westerly Terrace, and she turned left and I turned right." Stevens's job (he settled claims for surety bonds) took him away a lot, but he was glad enough to be taken. He had already got into the habit of living a double life.

To be fair to Elsie, the double life was congenial to Stevens long before they were married. When he was at Harvard, he worked hard, read omnivorously, and minded his proper business, but then he would kick over the traces of decorum and drink more than anyone should. By rougher standards, his debauchery was mild; when he confessed his sin, in letters, it turned out to have been a night's drinking and too many cigars. But it introduced a theme that persisted. His daily life in Hartford was bleak, so he enhanced it by epicurean gestures: ordering tea from Ceylon, paintings from Paris, books of Chinese poetry, shirts from Newell's on Park Avenue, dried fruits from California. He had misgivings about such extravagance, but he bore them.

Then there was Florida. Usually his job gave him an excuse for the trip, and his inclination extended it. He was thrilled by the colors, the flowers, the sunshine, the glory of the Keys; and he enjoyed in freedom the company of old cronies, the drink, and the raucous nights. "Since my return," he told Ferdinand Reyher, "I have not cared much for literature." Sex? There is no evidence that he resorted to that extravagance: drink, free talk, and cigars marked his limit. "I live like a turtle under a bush, and when I get away from town, believe me, I don't stay sober any longer than I must."

Not that "the malady of the quotidian" bothered Stevens much. His constitution was far stronger than, say, Eliot's. Pound made arrangements to rescue Eliot from the grind of a job at Lloyds Bank: the effort was a help, but it didn't protect Eliot from nervous collapse or the inevitable recourse to a Swiss clinic. William Carlos Williams found it tolerable to earn his living as a doctor, and to scribble poems every free moment. But Stevens mastered the technique of the double life, and found satisfaction in both parts of it. The evidence assembled in Peter Brazeau's *Parts of a World: Wallace Stevens Remembered*, published a few years ago, suggests that daily life in Hartford presented Stevens as a strong and reserved man, uncordial as if on principle. Such people are often described as shy, especially when their social demeanor seems to a disinterested observer to be abrupt or rude. More often than not, Stevens disliked people, and saw no compelling reason for discovering merit beneath their appearance. His own mind interested him more than anyone else's.

It is regularly assumed that one of the aims of modern literature is to escape from middle-class preoccupations, or indeed, as Lionel Trilling argued, to enable readers and writers to stand "beyond culture," as if in an unconditioned state. Stevens's aim seems to have been to live the high bourgeois life, and to fill it with objects as elegant as his choice of them. His taste in art was of the advanced kind. The paintings he liked didn't offer what he called "the realistic satisfactions," but at this distance what strikes us most clearly about them is the ease

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with which their incorporation into high bourgeois culture was achieved. Such culture may or may not feature nudes descending staircases, but it has no problem with *Nude Descending a Staircase*.

Richardson believes that the Armory show, held in New York from February 17 to March 15, 1913, was for Stevens, "no less than for America, the most important single exhibition ever held." There is no hard evidence that he attended it, though it would have been bizarre of him to have stayed away. He attended art exhibitions so regularly that in later years he thought his collection of catalogs worth giving to a library. Assuming that he went to the Armory, we are free to take the event as gathering into one occasion Stevens's interest in formally vivacious works of art and in the fellowship he enjoyed with a few men who shared such pleasures—Arensberg, Walter Pach, Donald Evans, Carl Van Vechten. His friendship with Arensberg collapsed after a few years, for reasons not entirely clear, but while it lasted it gave him access to exquisitenesses of form and style that he retained for the emptier years in Hartford. Cézanne, Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Brancusi, Jacques Villon: it is not fanciful to suppose that Stevens, walking to the bus or strolling in Elizabeth Park, brooded upon the afterimages of their works. He was a modern poet, after all, and construed his modernity from the evidence offered by certain sculptures, paintings, and poems.

EVEN IN POETRY he lived a double life. I accept the idea, first put forward (so far as I know) by J. V. Cunningham, that Stevens's entire body of work issued from a single predicament: What is a person of religious sensibility to do, in the absence of a doctrine in which he may believe? What is he to believe? How is he to act, to live? Stevens's poems imply an answer that is straightforward if seen in one light, desperate if seen in another: "In the absence of a belief in God, the mind turns to its own creations and examines them." Instead of meditating upon the three cardinal terms God, Nature, and Man, as in the English tradition from Milton to Wordsworth, Stevens conceived God as Major Man, Nature as the world, and Man as the poetic imagination. The trouble with this device, if it feels like trouble, is that God becomes just another name for Wallace Stevens, for the poet's sense of himself at the furthest reach of his invention.

The result was one of Stevens's two common styles. The first was ruminative, soliloquizing, issuing from one theme and many variations, such that it is easy to regard Stevens as a philosophic poet, if not as a philosopher. "Sunday Morning" exemplifies this style in its sostenuto mood, and it goes all the way to his final book, *The Rock*. It is a major part of Stevens's world, and Wordsworth is the man in the middle of it, however regularly the Wordsworthian mode is displaced or moved a little aside by more immediate recognitions of Keats, Emerson, Whitman, Arnold, and Pater. We find this style, too, in Stevens's readings of his own poetry: the large voice, unvaried, undramatic, the pace so deliberate that only one's complete confidence in the delivery keeps one in attendance. He sounds as if he were comparing sad notes with Lucretius.

But Stevens had a second style. If your mind turns to its own creations, you do well to make sure that the creations are lively, lighter on their feet than you are. Richardson makes much of Stevens's comic spirit, and of a theory of comedy derived from Bergson. Of course it is hard to think of the author of "The Comedian as the Letter C" as constitutionally a comedian. Did he ever tell a joke? But he found, within the English or American language, the razzmatazz and high jinks of "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle" and several of the early poems in *Harmonium*: "Chieftain Iffucan of Azcan in caftan / Of tan with henna hackles, halt!" No mere meaning waiting to be released required such lines: they were found in someone's head, rolled on the tongue, and sent prancing on the grass in nude abandon. No wonder Hugh Kenner still considers Stevens a nonsense poet, a revenant escaped from *Alice in Wonderland* with nothing to appease him but the dictionary and, for a manual, Elizabeth Sewell's *The Field of Nonsense*.

The two styles, like the two parts of Stevens's world, rub along well enough together. Staring upon a world Godbereft and therefore blank, you are not helpless. Verbal murmuring upon lack and absence and poverty adds up to time acceptably passed and post-Wordsworthian poems heartbreakingly made. "The Rock" is such a murmur. If you are in Hartford, you can make the best of it: in writing "Of Hartford in a Purple Light" you can think of "lights masculine and lights feminine" and end with "the irised hunks, the stone bouquet." That is to say: things are possible in language that are never otherwise visible even in a purple light. You can go to Florida. You can repair to big dictionaries, and find there words to entice feelings to appear.

Only one part of Stevens, only one mood, is a nonsense poet. Most of his poems are in endlessly weaving blank verse, as if composed in a long New England evening of fears and memories. But Stevens is no more a philosopher

MISERS

for James Merrill

On the streets of New York I've seen them rummaging, the grizzled,
the torn, grimed and scabbed by the world, their mouths muzzled,

misers of crust and Coke bottle, whatever is valued or needed.
My unhelpful heart glints out at them, but is unheeded.

One man we free ones cherish is freer to reassess worth.
Miser of love and language, walking the streets of the earth,

he ransacks, ransoms what we all hold dear, then some days,
like someone who, out for a stroll, all Blackglama and Cartier,

with a collector's vision spots, in a streak of debris
on the sidewalk, a little length the poor can't use, dusty,

stranger still something unbarterable, absurd,
unneeded, unsought—like my heart or an archaic word—

he bends down and takes it, thinking, "I saw it, it is mine."
Only the rich, the gifted, know how to treasure Twine.

MONA VAN DUYN

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than he is a comedian. When I first read his poems, I thought that their force and coherence must come from the grand philosophic themes, that he was book brother to Plato, Descartes, Kant, Nietzsche, Santayana, Vaihinger, and any other philosopher invited to his salon. He liked reading philosophy, as a pastime and sometimes as an inspiration: he liked to read high sentences, and to compose other sentences continuous with their spirit. Still, now it seems to me that his ponderings of reality and imagination, and the diverse relations he prescribed between those terms, were merely devices to get his mind started, and to keep it circulating. His ruminations are not essays in the theory and practice of cognition. They are articulations of desire. Pleasure, not knowledge, is Stevens's category. The conclusions he appears to reach are not aspects of reality adequately described but provisional appeasings of his desire. And inconsistencies between one apparently philosophical position and another are merely expressions of different moods, moods that, as in Emerson's "Circles," "do not believe in each other."

I DO NOT MEAN that Stevens was merely an epicure, a dandy, a connoisseur of savors and bouquets. The problem in understanding his life, as in interpreting his letters, is to divine how such grandeurs as "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" and "The Rock" emerged from the ephemera he mostly chose to display. Richardson's biography puts these ephemera on show, and ponders both what they mean and what they conceal. I am sure she is right to emphasize Stevens's early fear that he had suppressed the "natural and easy flow of feelings." In a passage from an early journal he wrote: "I still scoff too much, analyze too much and see, perhaps, too many sides of a thing—but not always the true sides." He was "too cold," he confessed, "to feel deeply the human destitution." Often he found himself more responsive to places, landscapes, and horizons than to the people who lived in his vicinity. Tender to his wife, he displayed most tenderness in urging her, when away, to enjoy her vacation a little longer.

Richardson doesn't blame Stevens for anything. Should he have tried harder, tried differently, with his wife? Swayed more willingly to the rhythm of his daughter Holly's life? Elsie remains where she chose to confine herself, in shadow: it is extraordinary that anyone would be willing to have so little life, and that little so niggardly. The biography allows us to think well of Stevens but to be pleased, on the whole, that we know him chiefly through his poems. Reading the poems with the biography at hand, and flicking the pages of the *Collected Poems* ahead of the early years, I find myself underlining passages that the life seems to annotate. The last lines of "The Novel," for instance: "And one trembles to be so understood and, at last,/To understand, as if to know became/The fatality of seeing things too well." That's worth making a note of.

Many little episodes in the early years, as Richardson narrates them, show Stevens backing away from being too completely understood, even by himself. His sense of "the fatality of seeing things too well" explains his aesthetic of glimpses, his veering from the commitment of a too steady "act of the mind," his recourse to "the pleasures of merely circulating." It is not that he became a major poet by inadvertence. On the contrary: he knew precisely what he was doing, and we find him distancing himself from Hopkins, Yeats, and Eliot so that he can choose the company he needs. The desolation of reality was as deeply his trouble as it was Yeats's. Still, he wrote his greatest poems by trying to evade it, making sure not to see it too well, and by trying to make up for it with gaieties as wonderful as they are desperate.

Richardson's method is to produce the early Stevens from his letters, journals, and poems. This biography is addressed to the common reader as directly as it is to the scholar. Opulently written, it is occasionally so suffused with Stevens's phrases that it conceals Richardson's voice behind his. Two references to Stevens "displaying his muzzy belly" may be thought indelicate by a reader who doesn't know that "A High-Toned Old Christian Woman" has certain "disaffected flagellants . . . smacking their muzzy bellies in parade." A glum passage about the death of Queen Victoria ends with a sentence that British readers are likely to resent—"If her horny feet protruded, they only showed how cold she was, and dumb"—unless they know that Stevens's "The Emperor of Ice-Cream" includes, with no queen in view, these lines: "If her horny feet protrude, they come/To show how cold she is, and dumb." The common reader may wonder, too, why Richardson says of Stevens that, in New York in June 1900, "his starker, barer self in this starker, barer world began to see with an ignorant eye." But these abrupt phrases may be found in "The Comedian as the Letter C."

I should not make too much of this. Everyone who writes about Stevens is susceptible to his finery. It is hard to preserve, in his presence, a mind of one's own. Joan Richardson sometimes yields her style to his, but she soon recovers her poise. Her book is continuously vivid, accurately evidenced, and—when imagination must fill a vacancy—richly imagined.

DENIS DONOGHUE

Denis Donoghue is the Henry James Professor of Letters at New York University. His most recent book is *We Irish: Essays on Irish Literature and Society* (Knopf).

TRB, *from page 4*

for Supreme Court precedent can't be absolute.

If the matter is weighty enough, and if the possibility that the Court will change its mind is real enough, it's not invariably wrong for a legislator or official to defy a precedent and set the stage for the Court to reconsider. Of course Meese's specific example, the *Dred Scott* case, is an odd one from his point of view, since what it actually illustrates is that bald defiance is not the only way to deal with disagreeable Supreme Court precedents. *Dred Scott* was overturned another way: through a constitutional amendment.

But why is Meese renewing this arcane doctrinal debate now? It's characteristic of Meese that he tosses these jurisprudential stink bombs and then sends his spokesman around to emphasize all the things he doesn't mean by them. He doesn't mean Governor Faubus was right to defy desegregation. He doesn't mean legislatures can routinely pass laws they know to violate the Constitution, as interpreted by the Supreme Court. Fine. But then what does he mean? Why is he opening up this Pandora's box of disrespect for the Supreme Court if his actual point is so small that it's practically invisible? I think the question answers itself.

The continuing conservative campaign against judicial authority is ironic, and not just because the judiciary may soon be in their hands while the other

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branches may not. It's ironic also because the American system of judicial review they find so irksome (for the moment) has emerged in precisely the way conservatives say social and governmental institutions ought to. It's not explicitly in the Constitution. It wasn't writ in stone in 1803. It has evolved over two centuries and survived because it works.

Judicial review is a conservative principle, above all, because it is the essential mechanism of limited government. Virtually every provision in the Constitution is a restriction on government, not on individual citizens, and it is these restrictions that the Supreme Court is attempting to interpret and enforce in its rulings—even, for example, the hated 1973 abortion ruling. The Supreme Court makes mistakes, but undercutting it is a bigger one.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

and that of my friends. Please pay attention to us—we can tell you what it's really like to be caught up in the struggle to be both a mother and a wage-earner. It makes me mad that we're expected to do so much and are cursed if we don't perform all these roles perfectly.

SHANNON STONEY BUSH
Cookeville, Tennessee

To the editors:

By way of criticizing my two-part article on the underclass that appeared in the *Atlantic*, William Julius Wilson writes, "[T]he systematic research on urban poverty and recent immigration consistently shows that Southern-born blacks who have migrated to the urban North have lower unemployment rates, higher labor-force participation rates, and lower welfare rates than Northern-born blacks. This research . . . is not even mentioned by Lemann."

In fact, I did mention this research in my June article: "The handful of studies of black migrants portrays them as a typical immigrant group in that they are, on average, more motivated and better educated than the people who stayed home. They also do better, after a few years, than blacks born in the North."

To say that the preceding 300 years of black history had no impact on the black experience in the North seems to me to be strongly counterintuitive—especially since we all know that other immigrant groups' lives in the same Northern industrial cities were shaped by their old-country culture as well as by the economics in the new land. That the black migrants on the whole did well doesn't, it seems to me, prove that there is no cultural connection between the ghettos and the South.

NICHOLAS LEMANN
National Correspondent, The Atlantic
Boston, Massachusetts

DEMOCRATIC HACKLES

To the editors:

An honest mistake in reporting deserves an honest correction. In "The Democrats' 'Yes, But' Foreign Policy" (October 20), Morton Kondracke misstated my position on the issue of military aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*. I am personally *opposed* to military aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*.

I write also to disagree with the conclusion of your October 20 editorial "Where's the Moral Fire?"—that "the [Democratic] party is clearly still deeply divided." One hundred outstanding Democratic leaders and elected officials who comprised the Democratic Policy Commission and wrote its report "New Choices in a Changing America" are proudly and strongly united in reaffirming the fundamental Democratic belief in a principled, progressive, positive—and, yes, pragmatic role for government. None of these men and women, all of whom are earning the confidence and support of their electorate, is "defensive, timid, or confused" about their national vision of a Democratic Party of common sense, fired by a sense of common purpose, making the right amount of government—and no more—*work* for the greatest number of people—and no less.

The aspect of the editorial that most reveals a shallow reading is your statement that "New Choices in a Changing America" "shrinks from offering concrete examples of how some of [its] deeply held values would apply in practice." The *strongest* feature of the report is its presentation of specific, creative, and positive alternatives to the economic inequities of the Reagan legacy. I invite your readers to write to me for a copy of the report so they can form their own conclusion.

PAUL G. KIRK JR.
Chairman, Democratic National Committee
Washington, D.C.

GOOD SHIP ARBELLA

To the editors:

I agree with Paul D. Erickson that the messages of John Winthrop and Ronald Reagan are antithetical, and applaud his condemnation of White House historical revisionism ("Winthrop v. Reagan," October 20). Numerous scholars, though, have pointed out that Puritan communalism—not Reagan-style economic self-interest—is the unique vision. Reagan's exultation of the success ethic is not new. He just makes it sound better than most of his predecessors.

In all fairness to Reagan, I note a long-standing confusion among scholars over the spelling of the name of the ship on which Winthrop sermonized. Erickson is right; it was the *Arbella*. But in the copy of *A Model of Christian Charity* found in his papers, Winthrop testifies to its being "Written On Boarde the Arrabella, On the Attlantick Ocean." Presidential aides are in good company if benighted by the inconsistencies of 17th-century spelling. Well-respected colonial historians—Kenneth Lockridge, Paul Boyer, and Stephen Nissenbaum among them—have added the extra "a" to the good ship *Arbella*.

JONATHAN SHERMAN
New Haven, Connecticut

HOMAGE TO 'HARMONIELEHRE'

To the editors:

I once heard a radio announcer read a contemporary review of a famous cantata by Bach, followed by the music itself. In contrast with the awesome beauty of the music, the reviewer's nitpicking remarks sounded pathetic. Bach was clearly light-years ahead of his critic. With Edward Rothstein's persistent howling against *Harmonielehre* by John Adams, he seems doomed to repeat history ("Hearing Voices," October 6). I have listened to this piece countless times, never failing to experience the sheer ecstasy of its daring journey through the universe of sound and spirit. If Mr. Rothstein only finds "sheer awfulness" in this masterpiece, I suspect he has some deep resistance to its primal truth. The music is an allegory for the passage of the human soul out of the trap of impotence into a glorious and playful union with the Infinite. I hope we see the day when Mr. Rothstein's reviews reflect a comparable breakthrough.

THOMAS FRANCIS TARBET
Santa Fe, New Mexico

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

My Dinner With Pee Wee

MY GENERATION IS HEADED for its midlife crisis. This is the time when you are supposed to freak out over the realization that you're stuck on a set of tracks that stretch out for the next 40 years in a single direction. It's too late to switch the train's destination, or even to derail it. But yuppies, especially older yuppies, may be different. Many of us have spent our lives leaving so many options open that it's almost a relief that age is forcing us to start closing some of them down. That relief, I think, is what's behind the popularity of Huey Lewis's song "Happy to be Stuck With You" (it also has a good beat and you can dance to it, and I'll give it an 89, Dick). The theme is benign resignation—a weary satisfaction with one's life and love. Who ever would have thought resignation could be a pleasant feeling?

RESIGNED TO MIDDLE AGE, what do yuppies do? They move to the suburbs. Observe them in their new habitat by following these instructions: fly to Washington National Airport, rent a car, drive up the George Washington Parkway to Key Bridge. Go across the bridge into Georgetown, turn right, and follow M Street past the Indian and Argentine restaurants and the shops selling baggy Generra pants. Then turn left on Wisconsin Avenue and proceed north for seven miles. Now you're in Bethesda. Park your car and look around. I grew up here. It was once a parochial and pedestrian (literally—people walked) suburb. A few years ago, the only ice cream store here was a Baskin-Robbins. Rocky Road, are you kidding? Now the place looks like Harvard Square: Bob's, David's, and flavors that taste better when you're high, like Indonesian Herb Garden or Peanut Butter Mint. But no one is high. One of the macho downtown restaurants—Joe and Mo's—has opened a branch. And office buildings! Sheets of blue reflecting glass and all the postmodern touches—sunlight on a broken column, green marble pediments, and clock towers topped with triangles. You think you've stumbled into a de Chirico painting. Streets have been widened and made one-way; traffic is horrendous. The value of houses has risen 50 percent in a year. They're all moving out here, from Dupont Circle and Capitol Hill. And the city is following.

BETHESDA IS NOW BIG ENOUGH to have nasty election campaigns. Really cheesy, disgusting ones. The worst is the race for state senator between the incumbent, Democrat Laurence Levitan, and Republican Robin Ficker. The highlight is a radio ad that features a judicial-sounding fellow intoning, "Levitan is guilty. Levitan is guilty." Then there are three loud reports. Supposedly a gavel is being banged, and poor Mr. Levitan is being sent to the slammer. Actually, it sounds more like three gunshots, as though the senator were being dispatched by a firing squad. Levitan has allegedly exceeded some campaign-contribution limit. And for this he's been executed? Little placards with "LEVITAN IS GUILTY" in huge type adorn the lawns. My first thought when I saw them—before I had heard the radio ads—was that, in this suburb obsessed with psychotherapy, some patient was unburdening himself in public.

SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T FEEL guilty—not a bit—is Michael Dingman, chairman of the board of the Henley Group. Dingman, as I pointed out recently ("Getting Dinged," TNR, July 7), is a guy who collects toy trains and sheep, and who likes to cook up schemes to enrich himself and top managers who work for him. After his company, Signal, merged with Allied, Dingman worked out a deal guaranteeing that for five years he would earn as much as the chairman of Allied (about $1 million a year) whether he worked or not. That deal led to a shareholder suit that was eventually settled. Dingman's latest idea is that he and 19 other executives will buy 5.1 million shares of Henley at $21.25 a share (about where it's trading now), and that Henley itself will put up 90 percent of the money in the form of a low interest loan. I've seen more outrageous cases of managements taking advantage of shareholders. (Viacom's executives, for example, are trying to award themselves an entire company, not just $100 million, on the cheap.) But what was interesting was Dingman's response to a suit by a Henley shareholder who was trying to halt the stock-purchase scheme. It "stinks," he said of the suit. It is a "sick, cowardly attempt to thwart shareholder democracy"—shareholder democracy being whatever the top executives of the company decree.

I HAVE A CRUSH ON Pee Wee Herman. His movie, *Pee Wee's Big Adventure*, a surreal odyssey in search of a lost bicycle, is the best film in the past two years. And now, he has his own Saturday morning show, "Pee Wee's Playhouse," which features old cartoons, a snack time, various romantic involvements, a weekly wish, and a secret word—like Groucho used to have on "You Bet Your Life." What is Pee Wee's appeal? First, he is androgynous as to age. Is he a child dressed up as a man, or a man who acts like a child? He keeps you on edge, wondering. Second, he is unsentimental. His anger is close to the surface. He is clearly in awe of small things like toothbrushes and the horns on bicycles. He's the best thing that's happened to children's television since the resurrection of Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd.

THE JAPANESE HAVE BOUGHT J. Press, the New Haven store (with outposts in New York and Cambridge) where Yalies have bought their tweeds for decades. What would our shrewd Oriental competitors want with such a dowdy place? There are reports that a dozen button-down broadcloth shirts (in white and blue, the latter for Saturday wear) and eight pairs of trousers with baggy seats have been shipped to Tokyo to be studied under electron microscopes. The idea is to figure out the secret of success of such great Americans as Averell Harriman and George Bush.

ACTUALLY, THE JAPANESE bought the wrong store. They should have bought The Andover Shop in Cambridge. There, an ebullient genius named Charlie Davidson has come up with the marketing coup of the year—a rosette (a little lapel pin made of red and white silk) in honor of the 350th anniversary of Harvard. He has sold thousands. He's obviously touched a nerve: everyone wants a medal, but it can't be too conspicuous. A Legion of Honor, a tiny red rosette, would be perfect. For those unrecognized by the French Republic, Charlie's Harvard rosette will have to do.

J. K. G.

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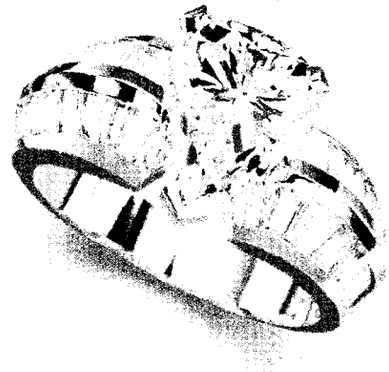

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